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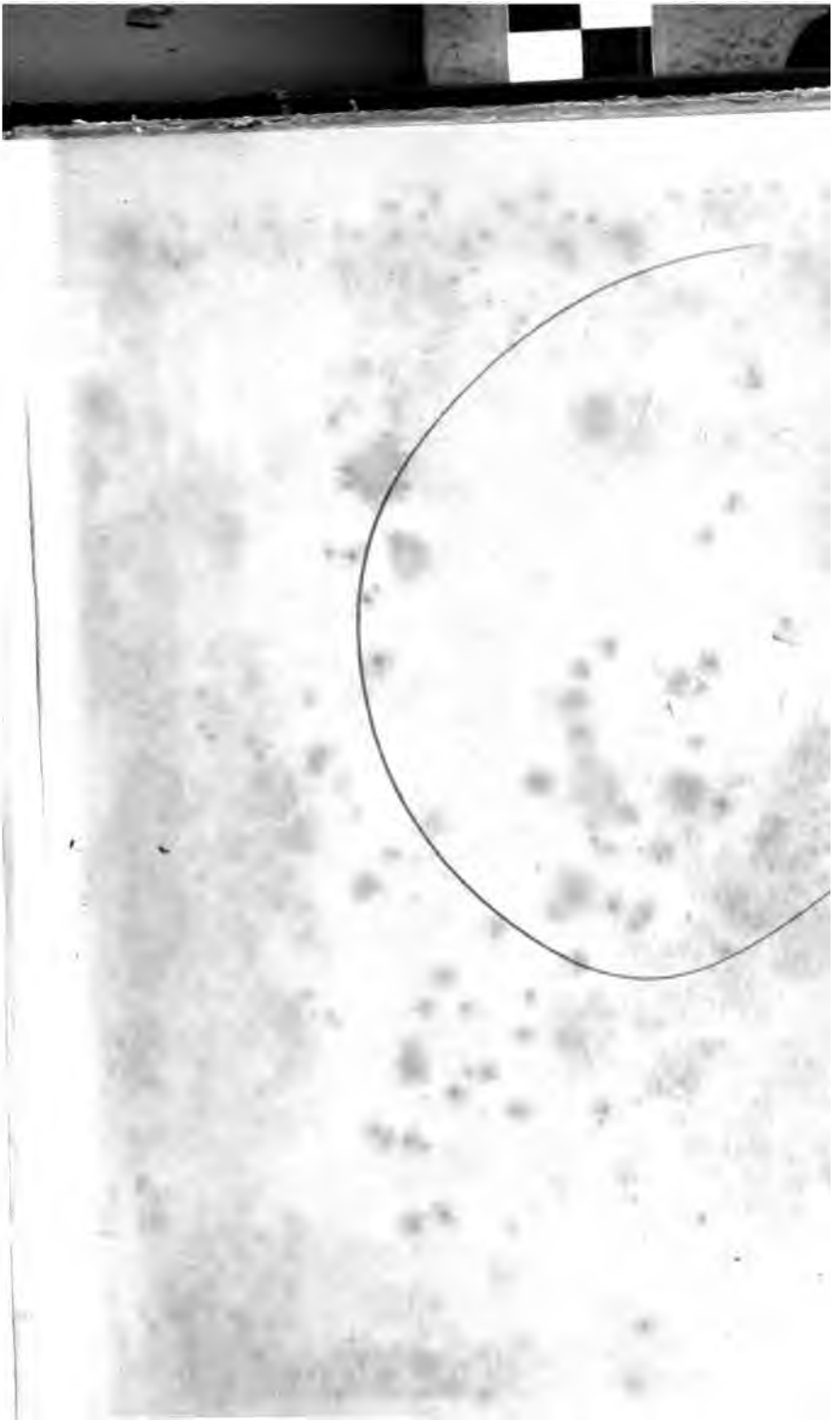

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TRANSITION

A Novel

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"A SUPERFLUOUS WOMAN"

"Old things need not be therefore true,
O brother men, nor yet the new"
CLOUGH

LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN
1895

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TO

THOSE DEAR FRIENDS

WHOSE COMRADESHIP WITH EACH OTHER HAS BEEN A SOURCE

OF

LIGHT TO THE WORLD.

"I dream'd in a dream I saw a city invincible to the attacks of the whole rest of the earth,
I dream'd that was the new city of Friends;
Nothing was greater there than the quality of robust love, it led the rest,
It was seen every hour in the actions of the men of that city,
And in all their looks and words."

W. W.

TRANSITION

CHAPTER I.

"WOMEN. First Class: Kemball, H., Girton (equal to 6). Second class: none."

The reference was to the classical Tripos at Cambridge, and those pleasant words crowned Miss Honora Kemball's very satisfactory career at the University. She read the list on the Senate-house door with the most vivid sense of delight she had ever experienced. In an age when women are winners all round, she saw herself as one predestined to be the particular favourite of fortune. Every tower and pinnacle was glorified in the triumph of the moment. But Miss Kemball's head was a strong one, and walking rather deliberately, with a self-collected air, she carried her honours with admirable nerve and composure all the way down the High street.

Very few University folk remained, and of these the aspect was jaded and worn. Amongst them were a few girl-students who were out on the same errand as herself. Three stood laughing and chattering on the pavement near King's.

"*Newnham!*" said Honora to herself, as she passed the group with a majestic air.

"That is Miss Kemball, of Girton. Her coach told me she would have had a higher place in the First, only it has been such a very good year, you know. What a woman she is! She looks simply splendid."

The words were quite audible and reached Miss Kemball's ear. Many such phrases, distributed over many terms, from small adoring students had gradually shaped in her imagination a very beautiful and complete creature.

Honora turned into Queen's. That was her favourite college. She passed Erasmus's tower and came to the rustic bridge. The silence of a hot summer's day reigned. The river was too still to disturb the ear with the smallest ripple; every leaf and twig slumbered, and the only movement was the stealing of light in and out between the shades. It was an hour and a moment favourable to the deep, historic sense of things, and it arrested Honora. A sigh of delight escaped her, and with it some of her well-guarded elation. She paused, resting her hand upon the bridge and looking towards the buildings. Everybody said—and by "everybody" all Girton is meant—that Miss Kemball's ideas were remarkable, and that she was never known to utter a commonplace word.

"If Erasmus could see me now!" she thought. "If, stepping through that archway in his long doctor's cloak and with his bent, dreamy head and thin, sarcastic lips, he looked up and found me here, and raised a rebuking finger and questioned me as to my right, how wonderfully I could answer him! Even Erasmus could not have foretold me. Men are as God made them,—neither

better nor worse, nor much changed from the beginning. Progress is with us. The women of my century are not the women of his. You can measure time by its women. And here on this bridge, I, Honora Kemball, just a nineteenth-century woman—no more—can stand fearlessly, ready to confront Erasmus, or anybody, face to face."

She leaned over the bridge and looked smilingly down into the sluggish, peaceful river.

"It has been slow, but it is here," she murmured. "'In the foremost ranks of time.' That is a splendid feeling. I am a woman—'only a woman,' they *used* to say—and I am behind no one. I am abreast of the foremost."

A knowledge of genuine acquirement furnished a substantial basis for her pleasant self-congratulation. She was amongst the first half-dozen classics for the year; only five men had beaten her, whereas she had beaten three or four times that number. From the University point of view that was indeed to take precedence in the world.

Whereupon her mind was hurried away by all sorts of visions, in every one of which she saw herself moving as the happy victor of circumstance. But a memory, strong and vivid from the prose world of every day, suddenly dispersed this dreaming. She looked up rather abruptly and turned again towards the arch. In presence of this new thought, her hand dropped from the bridge and she stood upright with an alert, happy expression in her eyes. The phantom of Erasmus had disappeared. It was still only in imagination, but coming through the

arch the eye of her mind beheld the figure of a man of middle height and square set form, wearing the modern academic cap and gown, and advancing towards her with a kind smile of congratulation. It was in imagination merely; but it was clear and vivid. It led her to seek over the old building for one particular pair of windows, upon which, when they were discovered, her eyes rested.

"Those used to be Mr. Lyttleton's rooms," she said to herself; "I wonder who has them now."

* * * * * * * *

A year passed away. Honora left the University and returned home. Her home was a rectory in one of the most northern of the midland counties. To the end everything in her career at college had been as it should be, and everyone was satisfied with her and with it. Indeed, she carried a kind of glory away with her and left a reputation behind; amongst the younger and lesser Girton students it had always been the fashion to adore her. To win a word or a nod from Miss Kemball raised the self-respect of the more timid aspirants to education. This courageous and successful young woman who marched straight forward and captured the citadel—whatever it might be—was in herself an earnest of things to come; she had done credit to her sex and her sex was proud of her; reflected rays were cast around, and all the little students basked in them and thought of the greatness of woman. Then, too, the lecturers, tutors, and professors had all of them been cordial and respectful in their bearing to Honora. Honora had seized on the advantages comprehended in an all-round education,

and had not concentrated herself too entirely upon classics; she had "dipped into" a good many things, and was able to talk easily and brightly upon many topics. That made her a very pleasant companion, and her straightforward, direct manner was an additional charm. Everything in the academic time had been a cheery preparation for an easy and prosperous career through life; and now the preparation was over and the enterprise had begun.

The rectory lay in a land that gradually sloped off from a wild and hilly district to a fruitful and pastoral plain. Honora had returned only to-day, and stood in the evening hour alone, looking round the room that was to be her own. Her finger was laid thoughtfully on her lips, and she was eyeing things with critical and reconstructive glances; for her habitual consciousness was of culture, and just now she felt a want of harmony between herself and the homely surroundings of her bedroom.

It was a long, low, pleasant room, with two wide casement windows, having broad, old-fashioned window-seats. Creepers grew outside; across one lower pane lay a branch of the Gloire de Dijon heavy with roses.

"That is very pretty," said Honora; "I shall leave the rose-tree as it is."

The windows were wide open, and the twitter of birds, the far-off lowing of cattle, and the distant voices of children came in with the scent of flowers and a warm June sunlight.

Honora began to move gently about the wide and sunny place putting it to rights. First she occupied

herself with two large cases of college books. In her hand was a dust-brush, and as she lifted a book from the case she dusted it before placing it on the shelf. The room was well furnished throughout, but with strict and old-fashioned simplicity. Upon the walls were no pictures save one over the mantle-piece. There, in a wooden frame, hung an illuminated text done in stiff letters, in fading colours, and with imperfect execution. The illumination had hung there ever since Honora could remember; it was the handiwork of her dead mother, and she believed that it had been placed there by her own hands. Honora never dreamed of taking it down. The words of the text were as follows:

"*Be ye not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding.*"

Every now and then as she dusted and arranged her books she turned her head and looked at the text with a frown.

Honora was certainly handsome. She was of good height and slim, and she had a quantity of rippling hair of a pleasant brown colour, which she wore loosely twisted in a knot on the crown of her head; her features were good and her eyebrows well marked. Beneath them were a good enough pair of brown eyes, but they were wanting in warm sensitive shadows, and were singularly unhistorical. That which gave the face real beauty was the clever brow and the living health of the complexion. Besides which she had a particularly pleasant mouth; the upper lip ran upwards in the centre with a very pretty curve, and had a fulness as though "some bee had stung it," and the shortness of the lip caused

her to show her teeth prettily every time she spoke. A beautiful mouth is a great gift to women.

The last thing that Honora took out of the case was a small box containing a few things that were either breakable or were particularly treasured. She unlocked it. Lying at the top was the framed cabinet portrait of a man. She lifted it out, dusted it, and then, holding it before her in her rather large, capable hands, looked again at the mantle-piece and at the inscription which bade her not to resemble the mule.

"I really cannot place Leslie Lyttleton under that text," said she. "Where shall I put him?"

She glanced round the room, then back to the mantle-shelf, and held out the picture as though trying to see whether by any chance the incompatible could become compatible. Finally she decided that nothing could bring the horse and the mule into line with certain distinguished memories connected with the man whom the portrait represented; the most suitable position was the bureau, and she placed it amongst the pens and ink and the sheets of paper which she intended to cover with her clever handwriting. And after that, the arrangement of the pleasant bedroom was complete, and she walked to the window.

It was dull at present, dull in the out-of-the-way country rectory. But life drew after her as naturally as seas after a moon; and it could not be long before—even here—she surrounded herself by "a circle," and turned existence into a prolonged and exquisite perambulation through a Greek garden, beauty and philosophy following in her steps.

"I shall rise early," said she, "and read Greek before breakfast. That will keep me up for the day. It is the Greek spirit I wish to cultivate."

The clock struck, and she started from her dream. It was time to go downstairs.

Honora's taste was formed upon the latest æsthetic model, but the adornment of the rectory from attic to cellar was solid, old-fashioned, and puritanic. As she peeped into one room after another on her way downstairs, she silently concluded that her parents in their youth had preferred things ugly. She determined to run up to London to procure a few "art things," for, being sole mistress now, there was no reason why the upholstery and furniture should not be gradually revolutionized to suit her taste. The drawing-room caused her some very unpleasant surmises, and when she reached it she paused at the door, looking round with a face of dismay. It had been stationary since its first furnishing, no hand having modified or improved a thing. The curtains and chair-covers were green, undoubtedly green. Of course she had seen it a thousand times before; but her absences from home had been prolonged, and to-day the crude colour mounted as a fume to the brain whose visual sense had been carefully developed and cultivated.

Honora made a horrified grimace; she closed her lids and pressed her little bit of a cambric handkerchief against them.

"*Je suis tombée en vert!*" she exclaimed aloud, with a little laugh.

The problem before her was undoubtedly a tough one. The table was a heavy, handsome machine exactly

pitched in the centre of the floor. So it had stood for thirty years at least. This rigidity was depressing. Honora, glancing round the room, found everything to match; no one had made the least effort to bring the place into line with the prevailing idea of beauty. As she swept into the room, pausing beside the centre-table to look at the books and to drop them impatiently, she was as conscious of discrepancy between herself and her surroundings as she would have been had the young Charmides entered in person.

Charmides was a kind of ideal to Honora.

Of course matters could be brought a little more into accord with her taste by degrees, but it was disheartening to discover that everything was hideous and that so much had to be done. She must impress her own personality upon the house and freshen it up from attic to cellar. She liked things brand-new, just as she liked her ideas; new, that is, in the sense of being the latest craze. By such little things was indicated the proper *savoir-faire* and *savoir-vivre;* she had a momentary feeling of being surrounded by decay. And passing to the window, she stood there gazing out with damped spirits.

"I wonder when I shall see or hear from Leslie Lyttleton again!" said she, in unwonted depression.

The world seemed very far away; she thought of it for a moment as a departing tide. But only for a moment. Her self-sufficiency was superb. With sudden alacrity she turned away and passed out of the room and down the passage to her father's study, where she knocked at the door.

"Come in," said a rather tremulous old voice of great sweetness in tone.

Honora opened the door and stood on the threshold without advancing.

Her father was seated at a table covered with books. Some papers lay before him, but the sheets were blank, and he did not appear to have been writing. She saw an open Bible and one or two volumes upon theology. The study was rather dimly lighted by a single square window and was sparely furnished, saving that one side of it, from floor to ceiling, was entirely covered by books. Over the mantle-piece were two pencil sketches of Oriel College, Oxford, and of St. Mary's Church of that University. The dates beneath were in the forties.

The glance which he turned to Honora upon her entrance made her wonder for the moment whether he really saw her, so hazy was it with visions of its own.

He was a venerable-looking man, not tall, and somewhat spare in figure, with a thin, fine face and white hair. The eyes were of a light colour and were short-sighted; the liquidity of youth had not so much passed away from them as is common in advanced age; they were full of expression; they had the saintly look, as though the doors of the kingdom had been opened to him and he had retained within them some ray from that glory. His figure was not that of a weak man, and if his shoulders stooped a little, it was but the habit of the lonely scholar. With all his learning—and Honora always thought of this as being of an archaic quality—he was very human; and when an apprehension of the brilliant figure in the doorway took possession of him, all the

father within him expanded, and the mundane and secular returned. He remembered his Horace.

"'Dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo
Dulce loquentem,'"

said he.

"Yes! '*Nebulæ malusque Juppiter urget,*' will do very nicely to describe the atmosphere of your study with all these terrible old books," replied Honora, promptly.

When her father began the quotation she smiled in grateful surprise; the answering pride on his face as she capped it relieved the sense of gloom under which her spirits had sunk in the green drawing-room, and, shaking her head back, with a bright look she came on from the doorway. Her father found her aspect very sparkling and fine; she carried all this brilliancy right to the old horse-hair sofa and sat down.

"Dear father! I hope my home-coming will be a comfort to you!" said she.

"*Carissima!*" he responded in a low, quiet voice, slowly and with an indescribably significant movement passing his fine old hand over the open pages of the Bible.

Honora felt touched, she knew not why. She recalled almost with self-reproach that she intended to revolutionize the furniture; and though she had no idea of relinquishing her design, she hoped very much that he would not mind, and registered a vow to be considerate and defer to him wherever it was possible. When a few moments afterwards the servant announced "Supper," and with old-fashioned grace he rose and opened the door

for her and signed that she should precede him, she felt that she should never have to be ashamed of him, even if a greater than Leslie Lyttleton came to visit her. For was he not a scholar and a gentleman?

The advent of Leslie Lyttleton was nearer than she supposed. As she sat opposite to her father at that miscellaneous evening meal, which forced her to regret dinner in "hall," he cleared his throat and began a new topic.

"My dear! You remember Mr. Lyttleton?"

Honora sat suddenly upright. She had been drooping back in her chair and crumbling the bread.

"Yes . . . *Of course*," she added, emphatically, after an infinitesimal pause.

"I received a letter of very kind congratulation from him this morning," said the rector; "congratulation, Honora, upon your attainments and success."

"Why did not Mr. Lyttleton write to *me*, father?" asked Honora, in surprise.

The old rector wore a diffident air.

"*Are* you such great friends, Honora?" said he.

"Why! Of course."

The rector looked up slowly and encountered her eyes—two points of unblinking light. They startled him a little. A faint, wistful perplexity dimmed his own. He had such an unfathomable reverence for the mysteries of a woman's heart and nature.

"He says he is coming to see us in a day or two," he continued.

"Does he?" cried Honora.

She sat more upright still; her eyes sparkled more.

"You are glad, Honora?" said the rector, with the utmost gentleness.

"Oh, very!" rippled out her clear tones; "there are matters in which Mr. Lyttleton can help me. I need advice in my reading. There are all sorts of modern books—the very newest—to which he can direct me. All was not finished," she continued, smiling across the table, "with my college career and my degree. I mean to do some literary work—*original* work, father. Mr. Lyttleton can help me. He will be most useful."

"Ah!"

The rector had a certain deep and tender reticence into which he now dropped all his fatherly surmises. He continued his meal in a silence which was unbroken by Honora, save that once she looked up from her busy thoughts and rather shyly put the following question:

"Do you think that while Mr. Lyttleton is here you would object to our having late dinner instead of supper?"

"Do as you like, my dear," responded the rector in immediate concession.

After supper followed, in the order of domestic rule, family prayers. The table being cleared, before Honora had made any attempt to adjourn to the green drawing-room, the servant placed a Bible and church prayer-book before the rector. Honora had forgotten all about family prayers. There was some hesitation in her manner and additional colour in her cheek as she unwillingly seated herself upon the sofa. The college curriculum, and the "dipping into everything" which had accompanied it, had gradually and insensibly purged from her heart and

intellect any belief in religious dogma. Mr. Lyttleton's influence had, perhaps, been paramount in this matter. Real pain and an honourable tumult troubled her as she prepared to take her unreal part in the ceremony.

The rector, in utter unconsciousness of her thoughts, opened the Bible and drew a candle near to aid his sight. He held it close to him with one hand, and it flickered disagreeably, while he sat with his hooked nose and shortsighted eyes peering into the page.

The circumstance affected Honora again with a sense of dreariness, besides that more excruciating question in casuistry.

Her father's reading was slow, and by and bye his voice lulled her restless thoughts and even excluded her attention. Her mind departed to other matters, and when the servants knelt down she followed the same order automatically.

It had been an old dream of hers to undertake the study necessary for a work upon Greek vases; it was to be a minute examination of the progressive art of Greece, its civilization, myths, and manners, as the ornamentation and pictures upon vases illustrated it. While her father's reverential voice read over the collects for the day, she was entirely absorbed in an imaginary conversation with Mr. Lyttleton, in which she confided to him the projected form and scope of the work.

Suddenly, however, something arrested her attention; words that were unfamiliar fell upon her ear; those sentences were not in the prayer-book, and the tone in which they were pronounced trembled exceedingly. She left off thinking about Greek vases and listened

against her will. And this was what she heard—hearing with surprise but without understanding.

"Thou that searchest the heart as with a candle, make clear to me also my ignorance and my error. That I who have prescribed Thy commandment unto others betray not in my own person the good and just charity delivered unto us; that I, Thy appointed overseer in righteousness, forget not to be an imitator of Christ's endurance nor set my head high where His lay low. Prevent me that I fall not into the sin of covetousness with Ananias and with that Valens whom, by the mouth of Thy servant Polycarp, Thou didst resist; but that, forsaking the vain doing of the many, I may return unto the command which was delivered to us from the beginning. From which let nothing visible or invisible move me. Meekly in my heart I receive Thy judgment, Lord, and as one who is beginning to learn. For Christ's sake. Amen."

There was a deep pause before the rector, his voice still trembling exceedingly, pronounced the benediction upon the small assembly.

Then the servants rose, and Honora with them. She seated herself again upon the sofa, and being left alone with her father, turned her eyes upon him questioningly, wondering whether he expected her to remain, or whether she might retire to her books.

She found that he was gazing at her with an expression not easily to be fathomed.

"Honora!" said he.

There was that in his tone which made her heart stand still in extraordinary apprehension.

CHAPTER II.

HONORA sat more upright and looked at her father wonderingly.

"It is well, Honora," he began, "that, now you have returned to me a beautiful and completed instrument, I should make a confidence to you of the spiritual experience through which God has led me during the last few years of my life. In mercy to my incapacity, this surpassing revelation has come to me slowly. You apprehend me, my daughter?"

"Yes, father; of course," said Honora, who thought no nut too hard for her intellectual teeth to crack.

"I am the more led to speak with you now and openly that I recall with extraordinary vividness my own return from that Alma Mater whose memory I cherish to the day of my death. Little did I dream, Honora, when God gave me a daughter instead of the desired son, and then took my beloved wife your mother from me, that he gave me the two gifts in one, and that I should live to see a day like this. For in my youth and middle age the estate of woman was not as now."

Honora smiled.

"*Vera incessu patuit Dea*," continued the rector, "and we who were young then knew not of this appearance upon our earth of a woman transformed, in so far as being mentally equipped as man and yet retaining her

inimitable tenderness and grace. That is also a great gift, and to me a special mercy. Shall I record my experiences, my daughter?"

"Pray do, father," said Honora, with a somewhat shrinking manner.

"It was," continued the rector, "at the University that my own spiritual birth took place, and therefore your return from the University seems a fitting occasion for this confidence. I had indeed a mind already consecrated to the service of God and His church, but it was under the influence of the wonderful re-awakening of spirituality in the church, which has been described as the Tractarian movement, that the true significance of my own vocation came to me."

He paused for a moment. Honora was looking at him with mingled distrust and perplexity. It was as though something droned on in a dream, and disturbed her thinking with a vague vexation. The rector's eyes were fixed on some heavenly horizon of his own, and he remarked nothing of her demeanour.

"I know little, Honora," he continued, presently, "of the state of religious feeling in Cambridge at the present day. From your University sprang the Evangelical and Broad Church movements. Concerning these it is not mine to judge. Yet I have sorrowed over this as being something which delays the perfect unity of the church. And it was said by St. Ignatius that should any go after him who makes a schism in the church, he shall not inherit the kingdom of God. I would hope, Honora, that your following is not of the Broad or Evangelical movement."

The rector's voice trembled a little, and he looked at his daughter in a suspense tempered by charity.

"Neither movement," said Honora, shortly.

"Then you will the better understand how that marvellous revival of the early Christian life in our dying church affected my young mind."

"I suppose I can," said Honora, whose heart began to sicken.

"You will apprehend how that realization of immediate spiritual descent from the first founders and bishops and—if I may in great meekness and reverence touch on that great truth—from the very Christ Himself, by the laying on of hands, laid hold of my life, and how I beheld our mundane existence as a perpetual sacramental service, in which not I alone, and those with me who were of the same mind, should join, but Nature itself in its harmonious obedience to the single law of God. As was said by St. Clement, 'The heavens moving by His appointment are subject to Him in peace. Day and night accomplish the courses that He has allotted them, not disturbing one another.' So that, as His minister, I sought carefully day by day lest I should miss His steps and fail of His command. Yet, Honora, such is the blindness even of eyes that seek for the light, that I now know I have been failing during years to understand the 'still small voice' of His guidance."

He lifted his hand, and there was a look on his face as though the solemn surprise of some strange revelation still haunted him. Honora shuddered. She knew not why. All about and around her young, self-assured life something was flowing that was dark to her—foreign.

"Now, listen," continued her father, "to what befel me six years ago. Especially did I fear lest I should lose for Him one of those sheep over whom He had appointed me shepherd; and it happened that searching my parish books to see if any of my flock were neglected of me, I came to a name known to me only by repute, and that a tarnished one. The name was Piers Norbury."

"I know whom you mean," said Honora, glad to touch something of earth again; "the old Chartist weaver and poacher. A disreputable man."

"And yet," said the rector, rather quickly, "the instrument appointed by God to confound me. As I read the name I remembered that I had never called upon the man, having shrunk from my duty to one who was notorious in his contempt for the church, and whom I knew not whether to describe as dissenter or atheist. That same evening I went out to visit him. You know the cottage, Honora? It lies in the wildest part of the country amongst the hills. But I reached the place before sunset and knocked. The door was open, and I saw an old man of a reverend appearance seated at a table reading, and I knew that the book was the Bible.

"'The Lord,' said I, 'has passed before me on the way.'

"At that moment he looked up and, without speaking, fixed his eyes upon me in such a manner that I found myself confused, and the words I had prepared died on my lips. They were very lonely eyes, Honora; I knew the look, for I, myself, have experienced the loneliness of life and the filling of that loneliness with things supernatural. Seeing my hesitation, he gravely invited me in,

and this without moving, and keeping his horny hands folded on the open page of the Bible. The impression of God in man had never before so overcome me.

"'Piers,' I said, 'let us read in that book together.'

"'Ay,' he said; 'you who call yourself a minister of Christ, read in this page before me.'

"He turned the Bible, pointing with his hand. A sunbeam red with evening fell through the dusty window and lay upon the page and upon his rugged finger. A mist was before my eyes, and I searched for my glasses. I remembered how Christ had said, '*Where two or three are gathered together, there am I in the midst.*' And I knew that He was with us. Then I got my glasses and silently read where the old Chartist pointed. And they were the very words of Christ himself:

"'*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses.*'

"'*Do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.*'

"Such were the lines towards which his finger moved. Often and often had I read these words, but now they shook me."

Again he paused, and this time a very deep sigh escaped him.

"All this is the merest mysticism," thought Honora to herself.

She was careful to keep silent, because that seemed the better part of discretion. By no means prepared to acquaint her father with the absolute divergence of their

opinions, she was simply afraid that argument about details would prolong the ordeal. Her eyes were fixed wearily upon him, and so far her uppermost thought was that the time she might have devoted to work preparatory to Mr. Lyttleton's visit was slipping away.

"You have heard of the Chartist movement, Honora?" said the rector presently.

"Of course; yes," said Honora, glad of anything as familiar as the testing of her knowledge.

"Norbury had been a Chartist. When young he was in the very heart of the movement. He knew O'Brien, Cooper, and other of the leaders. He had heard the demagogues Feargus O'Connor, Stephens, and so on speak. At one time his own name was well known in the villages, and regularly mentioned in the *Northern Star*."

"They were all demagogues, I suppose," said Honora. lifting her hand to pat one side of her hair.

"Not so," returned Mr. Kemball, gently; "there were distinctions between men here as elsewhere. The enthusiasm was real which procured such faithful adherents, I found that Norbury, for instance, still lived in the movement and the movement in him."

"The Chartist movement?" said Honora, vaguely. "I thought it was all over ages ago—long before I was born."

"Nothing that has the seed of truth in it dies ever. At the time of the agitation Norbury was a young man; but I repeat, it is not dead in him."

"Indeed," said Honora.

"There were words—some of them coarse enough in their ruthless truth—which had been burnt into his

heart in those early fervid moments of his youth; and from them the fire had not yet escaped. Some of them —terrible words to me—he repeated."

"He repeated coarse words to you!" cried Honora, indignantly.

"Just so," said the rector, calmly; "who has exempted us from the buffets of truth? The face of our Lord was submitted to the buffeting of falsehood, and shall we refuse those of truth? You remember Feargus O'Connor?"

Honora faintly coloured. The Chartist movement was represented in her mind by half a page of history; and the "demagogues" who led it were undistinguished one from another.

"My education has been classical," said she, in reproachful reference to her "honours."

"Ah!" returned the rector, absently. "O'Connor was a man upon whom Norbury once pinned his faith. What pathos resembles that of these shepherdless sheep in search of a true shepherd? It was O'Connor who, in one of his popular speeches, made use of the remark that he supposed the rich parsons who uttered the words of the beautiful collect, 'Preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth,' gave the editorial meaning to the pronoun and in their hearts signified by the petition, 'Preserve to *my* use.'"

"This O'Connor was a vulgar person, I presume," said Honora.

"It is a bitter thing, my daughter," said the rector, now looking gravely into her eyes, "when *truth* reaches us in a coarse jest."

Honora made an enquiring movement of the head. She was puzzled. But the solemn earnestness of her father's manner kept alive that beat of apprehension with which the interview had opened.

"Father," she cried at last, seeing that he awaited some reponse, "what can the words and opinions of a disreputable person have to do with you and me?"

"The methods of God have often been in strange disguises," returned the rector. "I recalled that the spiritual revival of the church named the Tractarian movement had been simultaneous in time with this movement of the people. At the very moment when my spirit bathed itself most in the inspirations of the one, the other was not far from me. I myself even then felt the stirring of that other passing wing. Once, at the season of the so-called riots, I was present at the passing of a crowd of the workers. And when I saw those stricken faces, those weary eyes and stern, accusing brows, which yet were exalted by resolve and hope—as one sees the eyes of the diseased and dying lit up by spiritual and eternal hope—I was shaken and troubled, and my conscience was uneasy, as though I, it might be, were guilty in the matter. Mindful of this feeling, I asked of my God, 'What have I to do with these?' But silence followed on my question. And it may be I forgot that I had asked it. Yet the answers of God wait long."

The rector paused. Honora waited also in suspense and alarm.

"Honora," he began again, solemnly, "*why* did the Tractarian movement, after the extraordinary outpouring

of the Spirit which marked it in the beginning, seem to go under and fail in the end?"

"How can I tell?" replied Honora, almost sharply.

"Was it not," continued the rector, "because it divorced itself from that other movement?"

"It may be so," said Honora.

"Who can acquit the church of sin in this matter? of the sins of covetousness and blood-guiltiness?

> "'*Of other care they little reckoning make*
> *Than how to scramble at the shearer's feast*
> *And shove away the worthy bidden guest.*'"

"Milton was not quite unprejudiced," said Honora.

"Just so," he returned. "But the accusation is old. What is new is to refer that accusation to one's self. Yet the church has never wholly forgotten the neglected vow of poverty. The duty and fashion of poverty she herself has laid over and over again upon her ministers as one lays upon the consecrated a special garment."

"Poverty!" repeated Honora, her heart shrinking from the word as from the prick of a needle.

"Of poverty," returned the rector, firmly; "of poverty which our Lord laid on us. '*Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves.*' But I, when I began my journey, sought first for my *living*, and coming here to be the shepherd of souls, taxed, without a question or remorse, my luxury upon the poor, and settled myself upon them as a burden to be kept—not in that 'meat' of which the 'workman' is worthy, but in repletion and display."

"Father, what can you mean?" cried Honora, now in serious alarm.

"Have I not to remember, my daughter, that to the weary and the struggling and the heavy-laden I have called not '*Come!*' but '*Give!*'?"

He opened his hands and stretched them out and apart with the palms upwards. He had forgotten Honora, and Honora knew it. She was listening now intently enough and that with terrified surmise; she felt as one hurried along a dark place which narrows ever more swiftly and closely to an inevitable point.

"It was a great sin," said the rector under his breath. "You will understand, Honora, that I went back to the neglected history of those early days and studied it in the light of the Chartist movement. I read the indictment which the People's Charter brought against the receivers of Rent and Tithe. I compared it with Holy Writ. '*Behold the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept down by fraud, crieth!*' Two great facts struck to my heart of hearts during this study:—the church did nothing to further the efforts of the leaders of social reform, and the leaders of social reform distrusted, accused, and opposed the church. Between the two burning inspirations of the day there was strife instead of co-operation."

"The church has always had its enemies," murmured Honora, in a low, unquiet voice, wondering what was driving her to defend an institution she despised.

"Enemies of the church were *not alone* the accusers. The good and pious Shaftesbury complains that out of sixteen thousand clergy at that time in England, only

fifty came forward to help him to redeem the children from the mines. Fifty only were mindful of His words who said, 'Feed my lambs!' Shaftesbury tells us that the clergy were cowed by capital and power. They betrayed Christ to Mammon! 'I find none,' he says, 'who cry aloud and spare not!'"

The rector leaned over the table, covering his face with his hands. Deep silence fell within the room, broken only by his heavy, laboured breathing. Display of emotion was not common to him, and demonstrativeness was foreign to Honora. She disliked it, and rarely found herself touched by it. She was not touched now. Her feeling was of simple fear and of horrible surmise. When her father raised his face it was whiter than it had been.

> "'*Father, why didst Thou form the flowers?*
> *They blossom not for us, or ours:*
> *Why didst Thou clothe the fields with corn?*
> *Robbers from us our share have torn,*'"

quoted the rector, solemnly.

This time Honora could put no title to the poem. It struck her as shocking doggerel, and she winced at hearing it from her father's lips—lips that seemed adapted only to the classical and scholarly. Was his brain touched? There was a collectedness in his manner and a clearness in his statements which forbade the idea. He became more and more earnest, yet never frantic; he put his case with firm moderation; there was deliberation and purpose in every sentence he spoke. It was this that caused her to listen with something beyond the lenient respect which was her habitual attitude towards

him. What it was all leading up to she really could not at present conjecture. But it was detestable to be met with something so mystical—yes, and dismaying—on the first evening of her return home, on the very threshold of her *career.*

She looked at the clock, and then arranged the ribbon of her dress to which the artistic pocket holding her handkerchief was attached. She passed her fingers over her eyebrows and smoothed them out so as to keep down a frown.

"Will you not understand, Honora," he continued, "that once I discovered that a part of my life had gone unproved and uncontrolled, I set myself to examine it? Hitherto that important part of existence—the means by which I lived—had not been assumed by me to be a part of personal duty. I had practised the rule of asceticism and of personal humility, but I had gone no further. So far the law of my Lord went; here it had stopped. The gathering of my tithes lay in the hands of my lawyer and agent. I determined that I would look into my own responsibilities and would perform this task for myself. It had become necessary for me to know whence I reaped my luxuries. I went myself from farm to farm, and found in many instances that the faces of my parishioners darkened at my appearance. When I made enquiries, stories of hardship were told me and signs of bitterness exhibited. In occasional cases I found that the farmers ground the faces of the labourers, and stole the tithe from wages. It was Coke who said, '*The bread of the poor is the life of the poor; and he who defraudeth them is a man of blood!*'"

"But, father! This was the Tithe. It was your right!" cried Honora.

"It was the *Tithe*. Clement instructs us that in the Eucharistic celebration not only the Bread and Wine, but the Tithes and First-fruits, had in the early church a definite place amid Eucharistic *offerings*. An offering, you understand, Honora, not to God's *minister*, but to God Himself. Such a thought illustrated to the point of anguish what I learned in my enquiries throughout the parish. I had traced the consecrated offering to its source. It had been spared by the sweat and suffering of the poor to be a gift to the Lord. And I had unhesitatingly consumed it on my own luxury."

"Dear father," said Honora, in a frightened tone, "I am sure you have been ill. I am sure you exaggerate."

"No," said the rector, sorrowfully and quietly; "it was merely that my eyes were opened. Pascal again—a later writer, Honora, and one not of the authority of the Fathers, yet one deeply informed in spiritual truth—shows us how God dwelt hidden beneath the veil of nature until the Incarnation, hiding Himself again beneath the veil of Humanity, and returning to dwell with us now to the end in the mystic obscurity of the Eucharistic elements—the Eucharistic elements which in the early church comprehensively included the Tithes and First-fruits. It was in the light of that truth—most solemnly borne in upon me in the moment that I recognised my sin—that I reconsidered my position, re-read the Holy Scriptures, and formed my resolve."

He beckoned to her, signing that she should seat her-

self by his side, and she rose and did so unwillingly. He turned the leaves of the Bible calmly, pointing out portions for her to read. They were mainly prophetic denunciations such as he had quoted before. He read aloud to her chosen passages from the Fathers—passages touching on the rule of life for the early Christian—more especially for the bishop or the servant of the flock. There was no hurry, neither was there fever in his manner. A furtive glance from Honora satisfied her upon this point, and she did not know whether she were more alarmed or relieved by it. The passages were simple, direct, and beyond the possibility of miscomprehension. From a churchman's point of view they were conclusive. When all was read, he turned again towards his daughter.

"Do you follow me, Honora?" said he, very gently.

The two looked into one another's eyes. There was fear in her face, pathos in his.

"Ah!" said he, faintly, turning away from her and leaning back in his chair.

"Father! I do not in the least understand!" said Honora, almost querulously.

"I had thought," said the rector, brokenly, "you would have followed me. That, it might be, I should have won your encouragement and co-operation."

"Of course I understand what you have said," returned Honora, "but *not what it leads up to.*"

She made the last remark in the desperate spirit of one who is assured that the worst is coming, and would fain know what it is.

"Will it be too hard for you, my child?" said the rec-

tor, with an accent of self-reproach. "Would that I could spare you, Honora!"

"Spare me what?" cried the girl, now with a real beat of anguish in her voice.

"Believe me, *carissima*, it is for your sake only I have hesitated. Had it not been for you I should have acted long since. I besought the Lord with prayers and tears to spare you, my daughter, my tenderly-nurtured one. And I could not find it in my heart to curtail the splendid expectation of your education, or diminish your imagining of what your home-return would be. You find me and your home externally such as you would look for?"

"Yes! Why! Of course!" exclaimed Honora.

There was an intrusion of the image of the green drawing-room in her mind. But at that moment she clung to it as to something precious upon which she had meditated an outrage.

"But as I am now, and as your home is now, it will no longer be."

"How is that, father? What is going to happen?" cried Honora, in a thin voice and with a shaft of fire in her heart.

"For six years, Honora, I have found it as impossible to touch the money that is called the Tithe as I should find it to take for my own use the money from the Offertory."

"Father! *What!*" cried Honora, dizzily.

"I shall never be able to touch the Tithe again. God's hand withholds me. I have not, I repeat, touched it for six years."

"But what does it mean? It has not changed! I was at college. But home seemed the same."

"During the last six years you and I, Honora, have lived on my small capital."

"Lived on our capital!" exclaimed Honora, a burning blush demonstrating how practically the most elegant woman can appreciate the bearings of a money question.

"Just so. The expenditure has—for your sake—been at the usual rate, and the capital—always small—is diminished. Besides the little that is left, there remains the income of one hundred and fifty pounds which I received as your mother's dowry. It is mine until my death, and afterwards yours. I design, Honora——"

"What has become of the tithes? Of the church income? Of the *Living*, I mean?" interrupted Honora, in pale bewilderment.

"I have laid that up in safety against the day when I shall know what is the Lord's will concerning it."

"The Living is not—gone?" asked Honora, pressing her tiny handkerchief against her lips.

"The Tithes are paid as before. But not *to me* or *for me*," said the rector.

Honora caught at hope. In this collapse of all those sheltering walls of dependent wealth here at least was firm footing left. The *Living* was still there. There were whole years of income probably banked. It had not been expended as the capital had; it was not *gone*. The thought allayed the wild tumult of anxiety which had made every vein and pulse in her body momentary centres of pain. Then her habitual equality to any kind

of occasion steadied her; she would not despair of altering her father's decision, of combating this extraordinary phase by healthy reasonable methods. And then she thought of Leslie Lyttleton and his approaching visit. It was as though amongst troubled waters her feet had touched a rock.

"I interrupted you," said she, turning to her father with a calmer look; "you were speaking of my mother's income."

"I design that for *you*, Honora," said the rector in eager response to the softening of her manner; "I would not force upon you the poverty I design for myself. I shall content myself with the one hundred pounds of interest on our remaining capital. This will cover all the expenses I intend to permit myself, and will be ample repayment for the work I do. I *owe* to my flock many years of superfluous luxury. I must live sparely now. The one hundred and fifty pounds which belonged to your mother is yours."

One hundred and fifty! Honora's instant thought was of the utter inadequacy of the sum to the cost of that life which she had designed for herself. And her father's income reduced to one hundred! Two hundred and fifty by which to carry on the rectory and maintain their position in the county! It was enough, perhaps, for bare personal needs—at a pinch. But the frame—the environment—the setting! What had become of the scheme of her years as she had sketched it? She stared at her father blankly.

And when the wistful old eyes saw the hard uncomprehending look of fear and shock in the young face

before him, he winced and closed the Bible and moved back his chair.

"We will talk of this later on," said he, wearily; "retire now, my child."

CHAPTER III.

THE meeting between father and daughter next morning was constrained. There was no quarrel between the two, of course, but the rector was cruelly conscious of having inflicted a blow, and Honora's feeling of perplexity and injury was too deep for her to be able to keep all trace of it out of her manner. Besides, she had passed an almost sleepless night. To one thing she had made up her mind—and that was to defer action until the arrival of Mr. Lyttleton, on whose assistance she counted, and to avoid reference to the conversation of the evening before. Inaction seemed to her the most probable way of preventing a precipitation of matters.

When breakfast was finished and the rector, glad that the discomforting meal was over, had drawn back his chair and taken up the paper, Honora came hesitatingly forward and stood before him.

"Father," said she.

He looked up; his eyes were tender, and even had a faint revival of expectation in them. The kingdom of God was nearer to him than anything else, and he be-

lieved in miracles. In Honora's cheek was a noticeable colour.

"You remember that Mr. Lyttleton is coming shortly?" said she.

"Lyttleton coming! Ah, yes!" said he, quickly.

"You *said*," began Honora, slowly and shyly, "last night at supper, you know, father—you *said* we might have late dinner while Mr. Lyttleton is here."

"Certainly, my dear, certainly," he replied.

She thanked him and turned away. He followed the graceful undulating figure with his eyes, which were very wistful, while he pondered over that sad experience when the disparity of sex is felt not as an attraction or particular tenderness, but as sheer separation.

There was nothing special for Honora to do that morning, and a ramble in the open air seemed the only relief possible to her state of mind. It was not easy to study Greek myths with an avalanche hanging over her. She longed to be walking vigorously over the hills, and by sheer activity to shake off some of the discomposure that was so new and hateful to her. The morning favoured her. It had rained in the night, and the air was fresh and clear and the sun not too hot. Honora turned unconsciously into the very path her father had taken six years ago on his fateful visit to Piers Norbury. It lay over a bare stretch of woodland, glorified by heather only here and there, and for the most part covered with a thin, colourless, hair-like grass. The road was rough and bare. On either side were broken walls of blackish stone, unsoftened by the tracing of lichen or the soft colours of moss. Here and there dotted amongst the

hills were bare-looking cottages substantially built of stone and having a long upper chamber, of which the windows for the most part were closed by masonry. Honora knew all about it. Those had been the weavers' cottages when the weaving of cotton cloth was a home industry, and the long rooms were for the hand-looms. The windows had been closed up to escape the window tax when the industry began to fade. Some of the old weavers lingered still within her father's parish—men who now earned their living in fashions more precarious than other parishioners, and who were not unsuspected of poaching. They were, in Honora's mind at least, of a somewhat riotous reputation as having been concerned in the Chartism of the forties. From another point of view they lent, she thought, some distinction to the place as being of historical interest.

Until last night she had classed them with other archæological reminiscences of the neighbourhood, with the reputed passage of the Pretender and his army along this very road—a tradition which, she was fond of saying in her accurate manner, was not quite authenticated. But the lumbering of the Pretender's train over the rugged way and the enthusiasm of the Chartists had hitherto appeared to her as events of about equal interest and importance, both being historically as dead as last year's leaves.

Upon reaching the highest point of the hill she paused, out of breath, and leaned against the wall. A red weasel in shy, frightened hurry darted across the road and vanished through an aperture in the stones. When that tiny rustle was over, the stillness was complete. Even

the birds flew too high to break it with the sound of their wings, though their shadows flitted across the sunlit road continually.

Honora, relieved by the exercise, and with the glow of it upon her, permitted her mind to run backwards over the memory of all her triumphs and achievements; thereby she gathered encouragement. For when had she proved inadequate to the moment? What had occurred was harassing enough, but hers was the habit, the accumulated force, of the victor. She must take up that force now and shake off the sense of emergency and not dream of herself as baffled. Her superb health helped her; already the cheerful blood coursed through her veins, her eyes shone, and her animal spirits were exhilarated. She took back the sense of a power for conquest and the feeling of completeness within herself. And her self-sufficiency broke from her in a spoken resolve.

"Whatever happens to me," she said—"and what may not happen if this is going to happen?—whatever happens to me, I resolve that I will never be beaten down. Wherever I am, whatever I am, I will live up to my present standard, and will never fall below it. I will *not* be poverty-stricken, mean, and small."

She drew her breath sharply and shut her mouth tightly afterwards. Her sense of individuality and her egoism included the need to produce striking effects. The word "poverty" had an ugly sound. Her father had not glorified it to her. She thought of a Christian of the early church, especially one of the Fathers, as an emaciated and probably uncleanly fanatic, and she had

no taste that way. Honora was a really gloriously healthy girl of the nineteenth century; her two well-shaped feet were planted firmly on our mother earth, and she had the tastes and orderly ideas naturally belonging to her sex. Her eyes dropping by chance wandered over her gown. She was very well dressed in a becoming costume exceedingly well made.

"I will *not* dress under my standard. Nothing shall ever reduce me to shabbiness," said she, with a quite passionate accent.

"Leslie will save me," she added. And the last words were uttered with conviction and a softened look. She is not the first woman whose earliest softening towards a man has originated in the idea that he may save her from contact with unpleasant realities.

Just then a slow, laborious tread up the hill attracted her. An old man was approaching, a man with white hair and beard, who helped his steps by a stick. She glanced at him with no special interest, but when he saw the dainty figure leaning against the wall, he paused and looked at her with long, leisurely admiration.

"A fine day and a fine view," said he.

"Yes; it is beautiful," said Honora, opening her mouth very prettily with a smile to utter the words.

"Showers o' rain last neet and in the mornin' sunshine."

He passed his hand with an almost loving movement along the landscape, his eyes following the same direction. It was a brown, work-worn, muscular hand, and it lay tremulously against the distance as he still outstretched it, the blue light showing between the fingers.

He had wonderful eyes; their look was at once absent and penetrating—the look of one who has been much alone with his own concentrated thought. When they rested upon any special face it was almost impossible to avoid fancying that the piercing depth of their look was the outcome of personal scrutiny rather than an habitual characteristic.

"They're lonesome," said he, in a quiet, wistful tone.

"Very lonely," said Honora, looking at the hills he indicated, "but grand."

"Grand enow. But see!"

He took up a position against the wall near to Honora, leaned a little towards her, raised his stick and tremulously pointed to a particular slope of one of the hills opposite.

"Lonesome is it?" he asked again.

"That dark steep bend of the hill where the coal-pits have been? It is very lonely," she answered.

"Ay; near the shaggy bit of a wood where t' crows are settling now. There. Well! You'll maybe think it a bit lonesome? Lass! To my old eyes it's full o' folk. There's always a stream o' folk moiling up yon hill-side. Or they're standing same as t' crows now, or more like huddled sheep together in the shadow of the woods. Why are they there?"

He looked at her suddenly, still pointing the stick. Honora drew back a little.

"I don't know. I don't understand," said she.

"They're there with faces and voices uplifted to heaven. And they are crying together for mercy against the oppressor."

"What do you mean?" said Honora, feeling a little alarmed in spite of the great age of the man.

"I mind it," he went on, "the same as though it were yesterday. But I'm old. Two score o' years and more I've been on this hill-side, and I was old when I came. Wife and children have passed from me. Forty and eight years have I wandered in this wilderness of the earth since I, a mon over forty, with hunger gnawing me body and soul, climbed yon hill to listen and to pray wi' the rest. Ay! wife and children have passed, but the voices are with me day and neet—day and neet."

"What voices?" said Honora.

"You're young, you're young," said the old fellow, leniently, "or you'd mind me. See, lass! This body o' mine has felt starvation, and these eyes ha' seen it, and these ears ha' heard the cry on't. And the like o' that one forgets niver. Folkses used to come there o' neets—the same as Nicodemus came to his Lord; and they had torches in their hands; and they spoke to the Lord of their hunger and their trouble. '*The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof!*' Yet some o' His children starved while others waxed wanton. 'So they spake to the Lord in their trouble.' And," he added, in a voice slow and deep with conviction, "and—*He heard them.*"

Honora was silent. Her heart began to beat.

"Ay! He heard them," repeated the man, in a raised voice and with a sudden access of energy. "'*He judged the cause of the poor and the needy.*' The spark kindled then is a-flame still; and nought can smother it."

"Who are you?" asked Honora, in a low voice.

The peasant turned his leisurely piercing look upon her.

"Piers Norbury, Chartist and weaver. I have woven many a cut, and seen a queer bit o' life i' my time. And I've tasted many a bitter drop. Folkses would na have took it so ill could they have hanged me i' my youth. I have had a price set on my head."

"Piers Norbury!" repeated Honora, pale and startled.

Piers looked at her with the same lenient, leisurely look as before; but the piercing light of his eyes had softened before her brilliant womanhood.

"So they call me," said he; "but you yosel will be no stranger here, lass."

"No," said Honora; "I am Miss Kemball, the rector's daughter."

"A good mon yon, a good mon. Better than likely. And I mind you ever since you were a little lass."

"Indeed?" said Honora, every vein running hot with indignation.

He looked at her now with a very evident personal scrutiny.

"It's in my mind," he said, "that it might be a wonnerful thing if the ministers o' God and the women would waken out o' sleep in one accord. It's in my mind," he repeated, "how once we hopen something from a lass—a gradely young thing same as yosel—set our hearts and hopes upon her."

"What lass?" asked Honora, coldly.

"Why! T' Queen. Victoria, she was young then, and we writ her—I was a young mon myseln—we writ her a bit of an address. 'Address to the Queen from the Workman's Association,' they callen it. She was just crowned. T' nation were half mad wi' joy. I couldn't

but think it would ha' touched her. We younger chaps thought a deal of a lass coming to rule over us. Lasses, by all that's said, are tenderer in their hearts than men. Happen it may be so. But nought come of that address that *I* ever heard tell on. Maybe we were too far off. And her mind—lasses, I reckon, are giddy things at times —her mind was just taken up wi' her crown and her fine sceptre and her throne. Maybe it'll be the same wi' other lasses still? Maybe they don't think? They don't see?"

Honora's gloved hand clenched itself in angry silence.

"This man who has influenced my father," thought she, "is an ignorant fellow."

And it burned with shame in her heart that it should be so.

"Lovett it was," continued Norbury, "that writ t' main part o' that address. A fine mon was Lovett—a fine mon. Now I never knew Lovett mysen. No! But many a time have I longed to look in his eyes, and grasp his hond and listen to his words. Yo'll mind Lovett?"

"No," said Honora, shortly.

She was in effect deplorably ignorant of the history of her own century. But she took it for granted that the man referred to was insignificant and disreputable.

"Well! He's dead and gone now—likely before you were born. I thought you'd maybe have read of him. Ay! He's dead. And he saw the end of his faith and hope no more than Moses did. It's still to come. It's still to come."

His eyes flashed and widened with some overwhelm-

ing idea; in the force of an indomitable faith his whole face strengthened and was lifted out of its age.

She was conscious that he was pausing for her reply, her sympathetic concession. Of course in his mind she was simply her father's daughter. But a suffocating anger was all the feeling of her heart, and her lips remained rigidly closed. This silence was an act of courage, for she was a little frightened of the man; otherwise she would have walked away.

"Well," said he, turning away from her irresponsive face to look again at the landscape, "eighty and eight years have I wandered in this wilderness of a world. And hope and waiting have comforted me. '*Thy rod and thy staff.*' Eighty and eight years have I waited. For I knew want and blows and hard work when I was a little toddlin' thing o' four. I was four when the burden o' work first became heavy and I first cried out and found none to answer. I'm asking still. Not for myself—my foot's i' the grave; and expectation died long ago. But for them that now carry hunger in mind and body. I have waited, and I'm waiting still."

He raised his hand and took off his cap and stood motionless, the fine rugged face with the memorable and prophetic eyes turned still upon the hills. He had forgotten Honora, and she had no inclination to remind him of her presence. She remained silent, the light of indignation in her eyes and the colour of it in her cheek.

Presently he replaced his hat, took his stick again, and made preparations to move on. As he did so, he directed one more glance of piercing scrutiny towards her.

"Ay," he said, "I'm waiting still. Till the man arises, or the woman comes to the throne, that will fulfil the promise of the Lord to His people. '*Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*'"

CHAPTER IV.

A couple of evenings later, Honora awaited the arrival of Leslie Lyttleton in the drawing-room. She had done her best by a little re-arrangement of the furniture and by the adornment of flowers to bring her surroundings something nearer her ideal. As for herself, reflecting that Mr. Lyttleton was a London man, she determined not to fall behind metropolitan taste, and therefore put on a very exquisite but costly dress. When she was ready, her mirror assured her that the general effect was excellent, and as she sat in the drawing-room in the evening sunlight, she made a bright and graceful if somewhat glittering picture.

Her father remained in his study. He came into the drawing-room once, glanced wistfully at the self-possessed figure by the window and deprecatingly at the altered furniture, and then he went away again. The renewed evidences of Honora's attitude made him shrink. During these two days, though nothing had been said, a hundred indications had forced upon Honora a conviction of the finality of her father's decision, and in face of it her courage and self-sufficiency were melting away. As

for the rector, he was realizing vividly the extent of the disappointment she was enduring; and he was measuring by that the immensity of the distance between them.

Honora presently heard Mr. Lyttleton arrive, and then her father's voice in the hall. She half rose from her seat and sat down again. Mr. Lyttleton as the deliverer was Mr. Lyttleton in a new light.

"He will take some little time to dress," said she, staring hard at the door.

In this she was deceived. In a very few minutes Mr. Lyttleton's step was heard descending the stairs, and he entered the drawing-room closely followed by her father. Honora rose with a soft rustle of her garments and a bright opening of her eyes. He had always been her instructor, and he was now her saviour. At the same time she could not restrain the flashing reflection that he was appearing before her in a rough tweed morning coat.

Mr. Lyttleton was about her own height, but being broad-shouldered and muscular he appeared taller than he was. He had rather a rugged, square-set face, ornamented by a closely-cut beard; his short, dark-brown hair had a wave in it, and he had a pair of exceedingly quiet brown eyes, over which a strong square forehead with marked eyebrows very much projected.

"It is a long time since we met," said the young man, looking at her with kindly reminiscent eyes.

"Yes," said Honora, with an eager glance of expectation.

"Ah! since that time a great hope has been fulfilled," said he, recognizing what was uppermost in her mind.

"You were kind enough to write and congratulate—my father."

"I've no doubt he is very proud of you," said Leslie, turning towards the rector.

Through all these commonplace words flashed Honora's hidden feelings.

"If you only knew! Oh! If you only knew!" she was saying to him with eyes and undertones. "Soon you will know, for I shall tell you."

The thought that he was to be the chosen recipient of her confidence endowed him with a reflection from her own self-esteem. That is sometimes the beginning of love.

Honora looked very handsome during dinner; her eyes shone with repressed excitement and one cheek was a deeper red than the other. The rector attended to his guest with fine old-fashioned hospitality. His ease and the fact that the dinner turned out well, and the consciousness of looking queenly in her handsome dress, gave to Honora a delicious sense of *savoir-vivre;* the present moment was as the first installment of that "circle" with which she had intended to surround herself; Mr. Lyttleton was talking brilliantly, and her father was no bad match. They spoke of politics and mundane affairs, of course; but the rector touched them with a kind of astonishing and angelic insight as of one who has studied them upon the Mount.

Lyttleton looked at him again and again.

"All this might and *ought* to be only the beginning of more," said Honora to herself, losing for the moment the thread of the discourse; "but I wish we could have

arranged to have the carving done on the side-board. Father is forgetting what he is about."

The rector for the moment was standing over the saddle of mutton with suspended knife and fork, while the servant waited patiently by his side. His face was turned with animation towards Lyttleton and an expression ominous to Honora had come into his eyes. Lyttleton had said something about society viewed as an organism. The rector was taking up the subject in his own way.

"As a churchman, Lyttleton," said he, "I prefer to think of society—of all human life—as a great sacramental system. St. Clement, you are aware, conceives of the Eucharistic celebrations of the church as a symbol of an all-pervading sacramental service."

"I am not familiar with the old Fathers, Mr. Kemball," returned Leslie, gently smiling; "but that is something of Goethe's idea."

"Indeed! Indeed!" returned the rector, eagerly. "On my part I am ignorant of German literature. It is true that in my youth I devoted a portion of my time to a study of German theology, which, you are aware, has many peculiar and interesting features. I own to having found a particular attraction in the writings of Schleiermacher, who freed himself in his more advanced thinking from the rationalistic tendency of the German school. But otherwise my range in German has been limited. I assure you, Lyttleton, you interest me."

"Oh, yes," said Lyttleton. "He expresses the opinion that the Protestant worship has too few sacraments; and it is in the same connection that he speaks of the great

universal sacrament, broken, as it were, into many others."

"I might trouble you, Lyttleton, perhaps, to find me that passage? Your young culture invigorates and assists me. Now, St. Ignatius——"

"Father, you are keeping Mr. Lyttleton waiting!"

At the interruption the rector dropped the fork from its exalted position, and, plunging it into the joint, set it to humbler uses.

"So I am, my dear, so I am," said he meekly, and darting a deprecating glance her way. "I am, I fear, too apt to preach—in season and out of season."

He sighed, and the carving proceeded in momentary silence. It was at this instant that a thought which had been uneasily troubling Lyttleton's mind took definite shape. He glanced across at Honora, who was handling the stem of her wine-glass and looking down with a faint, conscious smile.

"What has she got those fine-lady airs for? and why does she wear that costly dress?"

When the wine and fruit were on the table, Honora rose, and, after bestowing upon Leslie a very friendly smile, in which he was touched to detect something a little wistful, left the room. Upon a kindly hint from his host he, too, rose and followed her.

He found her standing by the open verandah window, in the now soft light of departing day. He saw behind her the mossy green slope of the lawn, the dark, flat foliage of the cedar, and beneath it an inviting gravel path that led on to a rose and flower garden. Beyond was a faintly coloured sky and hilly horizon.

She had thrown a wrap about her throat and shoulders, and stood with one hand touching the wood-work and her head turned back towards him with the same expectant, wistful look he had remarked before. In fact, her heart beat with hope and suspense, and Leslie advanced quickly with softened eyes.

"You were going into the garden," said he. They went out side by side, and passed under the shade of the old cedar on towards the rose-bushes. Both had the consciousness of youth in common—that sweet equality at starting out of which any delightful possibilities may arise. In Leslie's heart at least hovered a scarcely perceptible surmise.

"Well?" said he, eager to shake some preliminary speech out of this thrilling silence.

"I had a plan of work about which I should like to consult you," she returned, quickly.

"Work!" He started slightly and assumed the didactic manner peculiar to Cambridge. "That is well."

"I thought I ought to continue my Greek studies, and that I might do something original upon that line. There are plenty of openings, plenty of subjects that have not yet been touched."

Her voice was hurried.

"Yes," said Lyttleton, in a particularly quiet tone.

"I am sure there is a career before me. Mr. Lyttleton, I can't be content without a career. I am ambitious to be a writer."

A slight flush rose to her cheek, but subdued tears hung behind her lashes; she was making this important

confidence through the bitter feeling of defeat at the very outset.

"You will, perhaps," she continued, with a pretty shy air, "think it a very bold and vain ambition."

"Oh, no," said he; "I am only a little dubious about it. Do you propose to earn your living that way?"

"Earn my living!" cried Honora, somewhat disdainfully. "I wish to perfect myself in Greek culture, and to prove it by writing a striking book. I should like to examine the Greek myths and to write upon them. For instance, there is 'Ares and Aphrodite,' a myth in the controversial stage. I feel that these out-of-the-way things attract me."

"Yes—yes," said Lyttleton, with a pause between the monosyllables.

"I am *glad*," continued Honora, in a tone lowered by the remembrance of her secret trouble, "to have met you, so to speak, on the very threshold of my new life. I remember my debt in the past—indeed I do! It was you, Mr. Lyttleton, who first awakened in me a worthy ambition."

"I?" said Lyttleton, with rather an embarrassed air.

"Yes! yes! It was you!" said the girl, softly, and unconsciously eager to flatter the man who was to save her from her difficulty.

"What is this worthy ambition to which I helped you, Honora?" asked Leslie.

"You first awakened my intellect—showed me that I had one, in fact."

"Yes?"

"And best of all, you made me conscious of myself.

I was sunk in conventionality. You disturbed me—made me live—made me human."

"And to what end?" asked Leslie, in an exceedingly low voice.

"The end of it is," said Honora, brightly, "that I am going to write a book."

She shook off the depressing consciousness of trouble with vigorous disdain. Leslie emitted a faint sigh.

"*Don't* discourage me," murmured the girl, pressing an inch nearer in a coaxing way; "I know it sounds ambitious, but indeed I think I can do it."

"I dare say you can," returned Leslie, gently.

"And, Mr. Lyttleton, I do need some one to confide in. My father—he *has been* so good and kind—but my father hardly understands me. He has been going one way and I another. I despair of making him understand me."

"Have you tried?"

"What is the use of trying? One generation never understands the other. And the old never understands the new."

Her voice here fell to a tone so forlorn that Leslie looked at her in surprise. There was even a suggestion of tears scornfully controlled.

"What is it?" he said.

"Men don't know," she replied, "what it is to be utterly dependent on another's caprice and humour."

"Perhaps you have not explained yourself to your father."

"How can I do that?" returned Honora, in a louder, sharper voice. "It is impossible to explain to him the

fresh growing ideas I brought from Cambridge. It would be trying to patch new cloth on old garments."

"I don't feel so sure of that," said Leslie.

"It would!" said Honora, with almost passionate emphasis. "There is a gulf between us. Must I explain, for instance, that his Christ and his church are nothing to me?"

"Well! Hardly that, perhaps."

"How am I to act? I feel so young! He is growing very old."

"That is the natural course between two generations. You can't expect to be an exception."

"But all his ideas are old—*old.* Now I am conscious of being 'in the foremost ranks of time!'"

Lyttleton laughed softly.

"I am just a little doubtful about the accuracy of your observation," said he; "advanced thought does not always follow a chronological order."

"But we are most likely to find it in the young."

"True," returned Leslie; "in the young we have the Resurrection and the Life."

"And I," said Honora, cheered, "have been to the University. While there, I kept my mind open to every newest thing. If I had not time to study it, at least I dipped into everything that came before me."

"Y-y-yes," said Lyttleton, in the very slowest manner of one whose manner was always slow; "like your favourite Athenians."

Honora paused, drawing a quick little breath; then she gathered a red rosebud and fastened it in the bosom of her dress. She was trembling on the verge of her

story, and some vague instinct plucked at her skirts as though warning her of a fatal conclusion. She shook off the eerie hand and plunged.

"Have you noticed anything unusual in my father?" she asked.

"I have certainly noticed something unusual."

This admission gave her heart, and walking by his side along the pleasant garden paths, the soft aromatic airs of summer about them, and the glories of evening and sunset around, the great drama of a struggling human soul ran through her young lips in fluent phrases, unillumined by the faintest comprehension, and unsoftened by one touch of sympathetic emotion. But personal feeling gave force to this bare recital, and every now and then she reproduced her father's words with accuracy.

Occasionally the immense sense of undeserved misfortune barbed a phrase with indignation.

Mr. Lyttleton was an absolutely silent auditor. She spoke the whole narrative rapidly, with her face rather turned from than towards him and having her eyes fixed on vacancy.

"And now," said she, bringing her story to a close, "help me! Tell me what I must do!"

There was no immediate response. Honora paused in her walk in involuntary surprise. Leslie took one step in advance and then stopped also. He was looking onwards to the hills with eyes that did not see them, and the precise expression which he wore was new to Honora and puzzled her. So did his words when he spoke.

"Has this—*happened!*" he cried.

"You are interested?" asked she, blindly feeling that an emotion seethed about her in which she was not concerned.

The look in Leslie's face was as though a wind had blown against it.

"Deeply! Deeply!" he returned, with emphasis.

"I think, perhaps," faltered Honora, "at least I *hope*, that he only needs some one like you to reason with him."

"To reason?" repeated Leslie, with the same absent and absorbed air.

"I think," she continued, "that it is all born of lonely brooding."

"Perhaps: yes. There have been things like this done before in the history of the world, and sometimes they came out of lonely brooding. Yes! Yes! Honora."

A sigh tore his breast. It was like the sigh of a great and satisfied passion.

"Another has *done* it," he murmured.

Honora's eyes were blank with surprise.

"What is it? What will you do?" she asked him.

"What shall I do? Ah! That is the right question. For the first time in my life I feel as though theories were goads and conviction a spur. Have I ever believed before? Now I must act!"

He turned his face towards her; the strong and guarded reticence was gone; the features were expanded by feeling.

"Why! You have shaken me! Freed me!" he cried. "It was because I was sick with doubt that I could get no further. This is a breeze that cures me."

"You said you would act," repeated Honora, dubiously.

Mr. Lyttleton, in his absorption, took a stride and measured the garden path with his length of leg. He had thrust his hands in his pockets, and somehow his old, comfortable boots and tweed coat intruded themselves upon Honora, and pointed the vexation his incomprehensible behaviour was beginning to arouse. Moreover, he had the misfortune to turn his shoulder away from her; it was so evidently the act of preoccupation that Honora's sense of sex was offended.

"I came to you," she said, drily, "to help me in an intolerable misfortune that threatens myself."

Lyttleton turned round again with awkward suddenness.

"Oh! I don't know that I should call it a misfortune. It is undoubtedly a change."

A wave of self-pity overwhelmed her and for the moment checked her utterance. She gazed at him through a mist, finding him suddenly very much rougher and uglier than she had thought. He was looking down on the gravel path thoughtfully and fingering his beard, in the manner of a man perplexed for speech.

Meanwhile the sun had set and heavy shades began to surround them. Honora was glad of the obscurity.

"I feel it to be a misfortune which my father is bringing upon me of his own free will," said she when she could speak.

"Well! I see it might strike you in that way."

"I find the life I had chosen is put an end to."

"What is your chosen life?" asked Leslie, slowly.

"The life of culture," said Honora, just a little grandly.

"Well!" said Leslie, somewhat impatiently; "what is to hinder?"

Honora felt perplexed both by his tone and the words. Besides, his question had posed her, and she disliked being posed.

"To start with," said she, in a low voice, "I find myself homeless."

"Do you want a home?" asked Lyttleton.

Honora thought of the "circle" and all her pleasant plans with the rectory furniture, and felt that she wanted a home very much indeed. She explained a few of the intentions she had entertained.

"It appears to me that you don't want a home," said Leslie, when she had done, "but simply a place that you may revolutionize to suit some rather extravagant tastes of your own in exterior matters."

In his voice was a dry undertone; but Honora did not mind being accused of extravagant tastes; that seemed to argue a rather rich individuality. His want of sympathy was not, however, so pleasant.

"Don't you sympathize with me?" said she, with a break in her voice.

"Yes—yes. When there's anything real, that is. By the way, if you stopped in the rectory and began all this sort of thing—wouldn't you make your father very uncomfortable?"

"I meant to be considerate to father," said she.

Leslie laughed. Honora thought him disagreeable.

"There is a great difference between my father's mind and my own," said she, blushing in the dark.

"Yes, Honora. A radical difference. A difference in moral attitude."

Honora felt startled. Mr. Lyttleton was implying blame to her. And she felt herself to be not the subject for blame, but for condolence.

"I must seek my life differently from my father," said she, resolutely; "he is still sticking fast in the long-dead notions of his youth."

"From what you tell me, I should say that his mind is moving perhaps too quickly for your comprehension."

This remark wounded her vanity in its most sensitive point. She always pictured herself as skimming the cream of modern thought. But Mr. Lyttleton's remark by its very brusqueness argued a genuine observation. Honora hated brusqueness. She hated the raw material and liked things offered to her civilized—manufactured—cooked. She glanced towards him with a steely dislike in her eyes which he could have caught even in the gathering darkness had he been looking towards her.

"I find," he continued, riding heedlessly on in the ways of offence, "this action of your father's the expression of a very fine originality indeed. It is splendid! He has reached the very newest and most ruthlessly revolutionary idea of the time through the simple directness of his conscience and the genuine vitality of his religious faith."

"I hardly know what you are talking of," said Honora, coldly.

"I am afraid not," returned Leslie, sadly; "we appear to be hitting one another in the dark."

"You can hardly expect me," said Honora, his choice

of phrase offending her fastidious taste again, "to admire notions that plunge me into severe and undeserved misfortune."

"You tell me you are to have the one hundred and fifty pounds which belonged to your mother. That appears to me to be a very generous arrangement."

"I have higher ambitions!" she exclaimed.

And then she added suddenly, with proud compunction—

"Of course I shall not take the one hundred and fifty pounds."

"No," said Lyttleton, inflicting a new wound by the facility with which he accepted the sacrifice, "of course not."

Honora did not respond. What had happened to her world that she found herself suddenly plunged into confusion? She stared up to the darkening heavens where the stars one by one were appearing and found them smaller than usual. All her horizons were contracting.

Lyttleton waited through the eloquent silence with a troubled face.

"I find myself in the first great difficulty of my life," came the girl's trembling voice through the darkness at last, "and my old friend, my old friend——"

She faltered.

"It appears I have humiliated myself by asking help where I shall not find it," she added.

"You have not humiliated yourself," returned Leslie, in agony; "how can that be? I want to help you!"

"You do?"

"Can you doubt it?"

It is always rash to put the final test, but Honora's first week at home had been a season of storms, and she had a mind to fathom the extent of her disaster.

"Then if you wish to help me—if you are still my friend," she began, in a shaking voice, "persuade my father to give up his intention."

"No, Honora," said Leslie, after a long painful silence; "flatly—I cannot."

"Why?" asked she, in a voice as cold as a raindrop.

"Because," returned Leslie, with effort, "I sympathize with your father with all my heart and strength. I would emulate such an act if I could. I may add that it seems to have suddenly given me something I have long been in search of."

Through the darkness Honora saw him throw his head up with a significant movement. Had all the world gone mad together? Life seemed to be playing some dreadful trick upon her.

"You sympathize with my father? Then you do not sympathize with me?"

"No, Honora," said he; "plainly—I do not."

She drew back from him and sought for the next step. And then she knew there was no next step.

"It is all such a riddle to me," she murmured, forlornly, looking with desperate eyes into a darkened sky.

"Yes," said Leslie, shortly, "and to me too."

She glanced at him furtively once again to see if there were signs of yielding, and saw only a stern, rugged profile bending towards the ground.

A feeling of speechless hatred crept into her heart.

"Let us go in," said she.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN the two returned by way of the verandah into the drawing-room, they found the rector awaiting them. Lyttleton caught a brief look of expectancy in the old face that made him vaguely uncomfortable. It vanished the instant the two came well within the light.

Honora took off her wrap and tossed it aside; Lyttleton began to hurry out commonplace talk to the rector, but there was fitful absence of mind in all his remarks. Honora's face was blanched from its brilliancy and the bubbling over of exhilaration and defiance which Leslie's presence had brought her; the costly dress no longer became her.

She got some work—a piece of art embroidery by which cultured ladies show their superiority over the common uses of the needle. It made Leslie feel more discontented with her than ever. The rector looked from one gloomy face to the other. Where were the red colours of the lover's paradise, the swift, sweet arrows of the eye? His old heart ran down, and his hand shook; his courtship of Honora's mother had been a simple, delicate idyll of unbroken harmony. Meanwhile, conversation was laboured and intermittent, and as often as not partook of the nature of crooked questions and crooked answers. Honora was for the most part silent. She was too openly at variance with both men to trouble herself about social deportment for the moment; moreover, her sense of desperate plight was

very real. She sat with cold, proud demeanour and an agonizing lump in her throat, pushing the needle in and out and hearing, not Leslie's commonplace remarks of the moment, but echoes from the brusque truths of the garden. Then, too, she regretted her handsome dress. Puerilities of the kind are often more disturbing than great misfortunes. And it is, in effect, more wretched to be wretched in a gala dress than in a commonplace morning gown. She hated herself for having put the costly thing on.

Did Mr. Lyttleton suspect that it was her best, her very best? She hid under her skirts the fine silk stocking and embroidered shoe, and hoped that Mr. Lyttleton, with his conspicuous feet, had not remarked them.

Lyttleton broke in upon the rector's mournful patter of desultory remarks with an impatient sigh; and while his tongue answered with more or less of appropriateness, his mind told itself that any effort to explain his position or his views to Honora would be vain, because the planes on which their thoughts moved were different.

"There is no point of contact between us as far as I can see," thought he; "she is straining towards Individualism, and I am striving to leave it."

Honora had no desire to prolong her share of the evening. Worn out by nights of broken rest, and agitated as she was, she made an early excuse to retire to bed.

This cold, feminine withdrawal had an extinguishing effect on the masculine element. The two men sat abashed, listening to the gentle rustle of her garments

along the passage; and when that had died away, they stole furtive glances towards each other. Leslie, whose face was all made up to remorse, felt that hanging was too merciful for him.

The rector, who had been listening for the last sound, leaned forward in his chair towards his guest.

"Has she told you, Lyttleton?" he began, in a hasty whisper. "My dear young friend, is the door shut?"

Leslie rose softly and trod cautiously along the room to ascertain, smiling as he did so at the touch of human nature.

"Yes: she has told me," said he, as soon as he had tried the handle and returned to the hearth.

The rector looked at him with an unspoken but not very hopeful question in his eyes. Lyttleton shook his head.

"Mr. Kemball," said he, "she does not understand."

The rector sighed; his face was grayer and older. An old wound—unadmitted even by himself and long cured—ached afresh. At one time he had vehemently desired and asked of the Lord a son to train in Holy Orders. Leslie sat down by his side.

"The—the—*spiritual* situation is too hard for her," said he.

"I have striven to shelter her as long as it was permitted me to do so. And now I am, as it were, handing strong meat to a babe."

"Oh," said Leslie, rather briskly, "do not fear for your daughter. It seems a little rough on her at first, but I am quite sure she is equal to any event that may occur—will carry herself well out of it."

His tone was a little hard. Capacity for failure, as well as success, is on occasion found to be a grace.

"I trust that this has been no cause of offence between you," said the rector, hurriedly.

Leslie fingered his beard nervously.

"I am," said he, "a little out of her good graces, I must confess. I'm afraid perhaps I was too emphatic —and brusque. I have expressed myself, Mr. Kemball, as almost passionately in sympathy with you."

"And mind wrestles with mind?" returned the other. "Yet I have had experience in her mother of the deep capacity of the female for spiritual things—of an elevation of nature—an insight—beyond our coarser fibre. I think of an angelic hand leading in constant amity my soul to higher things. '*Non satis eloquor quid erga me habebat animi.*'"

An involuntary sigh from Leslie was the only response to the rector's murmured words.

"Your sympathy and approval, Lyttleton, I take as God's unlooked-for gift to me. I heartily thank you for it. The way is not dark; it is clear and full of heavenly consolation, but the human heart leaps towards human sympathy as well." And he bowed his reverend head meekly towards the young man.

Meanwhile, Honora had undressed and thrown herself upon her bed, and then she cried helplessly and furiously. They were the first bitter tears of self-pity she had ever known, and they were very scalding and hateful to her. Moreover, she was angry. There was injury in her weeping.

A great Frenchman has remarked that each individual

carries with him more or less unconsciously a conception of his own bearing and appearance. Between the notion and the fact is often a disparity, but there in the mind it lurks—our own ideal of our person and deportment. Honora's unconscious picture of herself comprehended a drawing-room in which to move effectively. There was always, in imagination, space about her and an opportunity for demeanour. And now the drawing-room had gone, and with it she seemed to lose sight of any recognisable self.

"Where am I? Where am I?" cried the poor girl, wildly clutching the pillow with hands that for once were tremulous. "Has it really got to happen so? That I shall be nobody! That I shall be like everybody else!"

That was the bitter drop to fastidious Honora! But she was no coward in her suffering. She summoned all her pride to meet the situation, and mingled some natural determination to produce a dramatic effect to startle the two traitors below with a genuine effort to see her way rightly out of the desperate fix in which she found herself.

Now, it is the commonest thing in the world for Girton and Newnham students upon leaving college immediately to "apply for a situation." It became evident to Honora that this very ordinary course was precisely the one left open to her. In spite of bitter anger and rebellion, and in spite of the hot tears with which she bedewed her pillow during the night, she had character enough to accept it resolutely. One piece of consolation remained, and this was not small. She would, by anticipating action and declaring her intention, force

Leslie to respect and admire her, and, to boot, make him and her father exceedingly uncomfortable by this direct evidence of the miserable straits to which they had reduced her.

Honora's tears had their sweet commingling.

Next morning's breakfast was an uneasy occasion. Lyttleton melted instantly before the traces which Honora's sleepless night and weeping had left on her face. He thought it unreasonable, but he liked her infinitely better at this moment than he had at dinner last night; and he ate his meal in deprecation and compunction. He made haste to announce an early withdrawal of his presence. Honora, who already, before she came downstairs, had slammed his likeness into a drawer and turned the key on it, received the announcement with a marble face.

"So soon?" said she, politely, raising an eyebrow.

The rector hastily passed him the toast.

After breakfast Lyttleton was heard banging his portmanteau about in his room, and was thought to be packing. The sound brought a lump again to Honora's throat; but she got the better of it by administering a severe and untimely reproach to the housemaid, which made the latter cry. When Lyttleton was heard coming downstairs, she waylaid him but kept the same marble face which she had worn during breakfast.

Lyttleton glanced at her guiltily, and out of sheer excruciated feeling earned her additional disdain by thrusting his hands nervously into his pockets.

"I thought you might care to know to what resolution I have come before you leave us," said she.

Lyttleton's eyes deepened into his kindest look.

"I should care very much," said he.

"I ought to have said the resolution to which I have been forced," added Honora, coldly. "I am going away."

"Yes? Thank you for telling me."

"I am going to earn my own living."

Lyttleton's face, upon which she kept a watchful eye, brightened and overflowed with some sort of feeling which she did not understand.

"That is precisely the step which you *ought* to take, Honora," said he, with unfortunate directness. "It is the one I hoped for, the one I felt sure you would choose. It will be teaching, of course."

At that moment Honora hated him as she had never hated any human being before.

"Teaching, *of course*," she repeated, bitterly.

"Well!" said the detestable young man, warmly offering his hand, apparently not seeing in the least why she should not be set down amongst the "of courses." "I can only hope that great good may result to you and others from this resolution. I hope it with all my heart. You will, I am sure, let me hear what you finally decide. Indeed, I shall be interested! My old address will find me."

"Thank you," said Honora.

And Lyttleton rather suddenly dropped the icy fingers grudgingly extended to him.

CHAPTER VI.

THAT same summer, a cab bearing Honora and her boxes drew up before a dull-looking building in a London street. Honora had been appointed head assistant mistress to a small metropolitan high school, and in the absence of the head-mistress through illness, it would be her duty to organize the work of the school. Honora winced when she beheld her future abode, and descended from the cab with a pale face. The door was opened by a brisk-looking maid, who accosted the new arrival with the cheerful friendliness of a cockney servant. Honora slew her with a glance, and when her boxes were heaped in the hall and the cabman had departed, freezingly requested to be shown the way to the Head-mistress's rooms.

The two rooms reserved for the new mistress were not unpleasant apartments, but they were small, and there was nothing of what Honora called "scope" in them. The green drawing-room, at least, had been spacious; but in the High School all the space had apparently been allotted to the innumerable insignificants who were called the students; and she was tucked in anywhere.

Afternoon tea was brought by the familiar hand-maiden, in cheap white ware that reminded Honora of the Midland Railway, and desolation deepened in her mind as she sat down to drink it.

Then a further incident occurred which seemed

broadly to illustrate her probable future. Hardly had she sipped the last drop of Congou at one shilling and ten-pence per pound, than the door of the sitting-room burst open and the head of a keen-faced, breathless-looking girl was thrust in. The hat of this energetic stranger was dowdy, her face plain, and her hair touzled. Honora awaited an explanation with stony mien. The girl did not appear to recognise that one was required.

"Miss Kemball I b'lieve," she exclaimed; "may I ask if the hour for the first mathematical will be chynged?"

This, Honora afterwards discovered, was the teacher of mathematics—Margaret Henderson by name. She was a cockney born, had been educated at University College, and belonged in rank to the Lower Middle Class. In mathematics she had taken a good London degree and had a genius for imparting her knowledge.

When the energetic business conversation was concluded and she had gone, Honora pressed her hand first to her ear and then to her heart.

"How am I to endure these *persons?*" she exclaimed.

A week's experience increased her loathing of the position. She had to receive admonition and advice from a Philistinic assemblage who were called "The Committee" and who did not own a degree between them. Also she had to listen to the detailed anxieties of fussy middle-class parents, who mostly used the cockney vowels; and each one of whom had a separate fad about the instruction of her own particular lamb in the fold. Now, to Honora's eye all the lambs were so many heads of sheep.

But the new mistress had a glorious capacity for

work, and her University training had given her the instinct of thoroughness and finish in what she undertook. The one thing Honora would not do as long as health and strength were left her, was to sit down and accept defeat in any situation whatever. She owed it to her various grudges with life to succeed, to turn even this sordid experience into an evidence of her mastery over circumstance, and to keep these baying dogs of depressing misery at a distance from her. Something victorious and striking she *must* achieve—even here.

Before the first half-term had expired she discovered that she had succeeded in her aim. The Head-mistress died, and the Committee so far signified their satisfaction with Honora as to appoint her to the vacant place.

To herself, however, no weeks of her life had ever seemed so barren and fruitless. In spite of her quick rise, she felt herself to be the victim of necessity and injustice; and though occupied from morning to night, she hated the processes of her work—or told herself that she did so—and was indifferent to the results.

There was another thing which the experience of half a term made only too plain to Honora. The teachers at the High School did not offer her any of that agreeable incense to which she had been accustomed at Girton. They were all engrossed in their work and in their children, and as soon as school hours were over they departed to their various homes in twos or threes. Their friendships and outside careers seemed to have been settled once for all before her arrival, and to be carried on now without an attempt to include her in them.

It was in the middle of the first term of her experiment as a mistress that Honora Kemball first learned the meaning of loneliness.

"I am completely isolated," said she one day to herself with a strange new pang.

And then she tried to say to herself that this was only evidence of her superiority to the commonplace surroundings. At the moment, the day's work being done, she stood at the window watching the departure of the last teacher. This was a girl of about twenty-three years old, who had just left the house. No sooner had she disappeared than Honora sat down and thought about her. Loneliness had already made her acquainted with those spiritual companions who "torment us with discipline."

The name of the girl was Lucilla Dennison. She taught English, economics, history, and so on. She had taken a moral science degree. And Honora despised moral science. She would not for the world have acknowledged that Lucilla piqued and interested her.

There was nothing in the English teacher, as the Headmistress told herself over and over again, to keep the mind on edge with expectation. She had a slight figure, and was of dark but not brunette colouring, with cloudy dark hair, grey eyes, and a not too liberal tint in her rather spare, thin cheek. She appeared to possess a great force of work—Honora thought the teachers grovelled in work and had no aspiration—and she spoke little, that little being usually uttered in a soft, quiet voice which Honora's clear metallic tones could easily have overborne.

But there was something in her beyond quietude and silent energy. There were moments when the girl's eyes disturbed Honora with vague suggestions; at others she thought she detected in them a faint light of sarcasm.

In short, Honora's estimate of Lucilla's character was unwillingly a high one. And yet this same Lucilla appeared to have a particular friendliness for Margaret Henderson, whose cockney accent and cheery good-fellowship of manner prevented Honora from seeing anything in her save a sum of vulgarities.

One day a flood of light was thrown upon the estimate this world, for which she had exchanged the academic elegance of Girton, held her in.

The occasion was some involuntary eaves-dropping on her part; she found herself on one side of a door that was ajar and which she believed separated her from an empty room; but from the other side came voices, and the first words she caught arrested her. The proverb tells us that listeners never hear any good of themselves; and they were indeed stinging sentences that crept straight to Honora's ear through that distressful aperture.

"You see you never can reckon on anything really sensible from Miss Kemball."

That was Margaret Henderson's voice.

"Leave her out of the reckoning, then. Subtract her as a piece of absurdity from the sum of general conditions, and have done with her."

It was Lucilla Dennison's dry, quiet tone which pointed this ruthless brutality.

Honora, on hearing voices, would at first have withdrawn. But upon discovering that she herself was in question, and that Lucilla was one of the speakers, she deliberately remained. No one's interest, save her own, was betrayed by her doing so; and only till this moment had she realized how she ached to know the estimate in which Lucilla held her, and to learn the causes that were driving her into isolation. This isolation, though flattering to her pride on one reading, was always open to another less comforting interpretation.

"I could do that," replied Miss Henderson, "if my own interest only were in question. But Florie, you see, has distinctly deteriorated during this term."

[Honora believed that one of the heads of sheep was referred to.]

"You observe," continued Miss Henderson, in the particularly broad cockney by which she signalized emotion, "how very little originality Miss Kemball is putting into her estimate of the scope of the work! She hangs by routine in a way that is simply paralyzing. The school will die under it; the younger children are already flagging,—Florie particularly. She misses Miss Forbes. Miss Forbes was unwearying in her personal influence over the children and in the variety of her resources."

[Miss Forbes was, Honora recalled, the late Headmistress.]

"Oh, yes! Of course that is the exasperating, the serious part of the matter. If it were not for the loss to the children and to the school, I should find Miss Kemball rather an interesting study of the grotesque."

"The elder girls are better off," returned Miss Hen-

derson. "They don't need the same kind of *personal* attention or care—not so much at least. But even there——"

[Miss Henderson left an expressive blank; Honora felt, though she could not see, the shrug of the shoulders that supplied it.]

"I am afraid," assented Lucilla, "that it is rather hopeless work all round."

"The long and the short of it is," continued Miss Henderson briskly, and with a quite desperate access of cockney, "that we have a stick of sealing-wax at the head of affairs instead of a comfortable woman, and you and I between us cannot keep the school up to its former mark."

"No—not with the best will," said Lucilla, "considering the amount of routine work we have to get through. I never saw anything," she added slowly and deliberately [Honora stood with suspended breath waiting on Lucilla's merciless tones], "quite so silly and so inadequate as Miss Kemball."

Honora turned away and fled with silent, winged feet to take refuge in her own room. The conversation was "privileged," of course, but every word was a corroding shaft in that most sensitive part which we good-naturedly name our "vanity"—as of a thing small and of no account—but which is to the majority really the heart's core of us.

She sat down, covering her face with her hands because of the blood that flamed and burnt in her cheeks and the bitterness of the tears in her eyes.

* * * * * * * *

Meanwhile, Lucilla and Margaret went home.

Lucilla's residence was in a big model dwelling-house. Here she had taken a small flat and lived alone, doing the little household work herself, and valuing the lonely evenings for their opportunity of study.

The rooms were scrupulously neat, and so plainly furnished that one could hardly apply the word "furniture," with its middle-class suggestion of heavy expenditure and horrible worry, to the necessary appliances for daily life prettily decorated by her own hands, which made up the list of her belongings. Lucilla was gifted with the sense of orderliness, of womanly instinct in the details of life. She now moved about deftly, preparing her evening meal. And that being over and the traces of it cleared away, she lit her lamp and sat down, first to rest and then to work.

To rest with Lucilla was to dream. She sat quite still, the light from the lamp falling on some of the ruffled hairs of her cloudy locks and leaving her face, with its small and rather grave features, in shadow. The dreams of Lucilla were not the ordinary day-dreams. She was not dreaming of a House, a Husband, and her own devotion to them. It may be that a new age has left the uniform features of that old dream somewhat disturbed. Lucilla never had pictured herself as the domestic companion of an unbroken and impossible happiness. In all her dreaming she went forward with a restless circle of fellow-workers, and waged warfare against a shameless world. Very probably her own personality was rather severely and coldly outlined to her imagination, and her personal expectation meagre. But her rejection of

the commonplace idea of happiness and the conventional idea of self-immolation had a deeper root. In her grey eyes was a hint of storm, and revolt tinctured a good deal of her thinking; for she had not in the least an acquiescent spirit, but questioned everything and took little for granted.

It was this which gave the quality to her eyes which Honora had noticed—a quality not always agreeable. But if she had a rather strong critical faculty, she possessed at the centre of her being a white heat of capacity for self-devotion—a fire-spot of passion in her heart. This force of emotional capacity was, however, usually restrained. She did not exhibit it in her ordinary bearing. A sense of *measure*, of the orderliness to which reference has already been made, was intimately interfused through every habit of her life.

The hour being over, she changed her seat for one uncompromisingly stiff, and drew up to the table and her books. The glare of the lamp revealed all that was spare and severe in her features—the short shrift of her habit with hypocrisies and shams—and also a very rare quality of intellectuality in the brow. It also threw flickering shadows on the walls and ceiling and made the one luxurious corner of the room glad with bright beams—that was the corner of the books in their gilt and coloured bindings.

Hardly twenty minutes had passed when a step was heard mounting the stair. Lucilla looked up, her pen suspended in her hand, and listened. The step was a tolerably solid one, but it was too irregular for a man's.

For a perceptible second a colour and light as of wild

expectation had flashed into her face; it died out again at the first volatile feminine trip of the advancing feet.

They paused at her door and a knock came. Lucilla opening, found Honora Kemball standing outside.

Honora had changed from the brilliant figure who had startled the rector into a Latin compliment. A hard day's work left her sometimes indifferent to details in her dress and hair; and at this moment she was breathless with running after Lucilla. Besides which, her face had the first timid, doubtful look that had ever changed it. Lucilla upon seeing her had been unable to control the faint flash of sarcasm in her eyes, and even an involuntary contraction of the lips in a whimsical grimace. Whereat all the "superior person" in Honora gave way within her and the pent-up misery of weeks found natural vent. She shrank back, and two tears, very unpremeditated and sudden, rolled down her cheeks.

Lucilla closed the door, and, looking paler than usual, drew the Head-mistress to a chair.

"What is it?" said she.

"I heard every word that you said of me in the classroom," returned Honora with desperate honesty.

Lucilla coloured, but made no attempt to apologize. Honora thought, however, that the grey eyes had a less judicial look and did not hold her at a distance on points of sarcasm.

"Evidently, in your opinion, I have not been doing my duty," she continued.

"Scrupulously," returned Lucilla.

The dry tone of the praise was worse than a rebuke.

"Of what, then, do you accuse me?"

"I have not accused you. One always commends perfect behaviour," returned Lucilla.

The pressure of life was being applied rather heavily to the unfortunate Honora for the time being. But it was easier to accept the screw from a stranger and from one of her own sex than it had been to take it in her own home from Leslie.

"I entreat you to be open with me—as open to me as you were to Miss Henderson in the class-room," said she, with an earnest and notable effort.

Lucilla put her hand to her cheek with a shy air.

"Scarcely anything is so useless as perfect behaviour," she said.

"Do help me!" murmured Honora, now on the tiptoe for a moral discovery. "I have been so very lonely lately."

"Ah!" The exclamation was soft, and revealed quite a new side to Lucilla's character. "But if I help you it will be with truth."

"Oh, of course," returned Honora drearily, and with disturbing memories of Mr. Leslie Lyttleton; "I neither expect nor wish for anything else."

"You see what humanity wants is humanness—however faulty."

"Am I not human?"

"On stilts."

"Indeed, you are mistaken! Or perhaps it is because I dislike my work."

"Indeed, *you* are mistaken there. I never saw anybody who enjoyed the work so much."

Honora heard with surprise, but with conviction. She *did* like the work.

"What you hate is our common element. You try to separate yourself from it by being superior. And in that way, of course, you lose your chances."

Honora inwardly felt there was justification for the assumption. On her mother's side she was entitled to a notice in the collateral branches of the peerage, and her father's father was enrolled amongst the "Landed Gentry." But she said nothing. There are vulgarities to which we give proud hospitality in our heart of hearts, and would not for the world thrust out in the nakedness of speech.

"And, of course, the common element resents fastidious treatment."

"I do not think I have intended anything of the kind," said Honora, cautiously; "but I have felt lonely."

"Because you will not sit in the common boat. What you yearn for is distinction—difference. Your kind retaliates by leaving you out of the calculation."

"Perhaps you do not understand," said Honora, timidly, and still uncertain of the quality of mind to which her words were uttered, "that I had not expected to have to work—not in this way—not for my living."

The rather disdainful and severe little profile of Lucilla did not melt at this confidence.

"Oh," said she, "is that your trouble?"

Honora looked rather than spoke her inquiry.

"You go about as though you were under a cloud, you know."

"Do I?"

"Margaret Henderson has made all the excuses for you she could, because she was convinced you were in trouble."

Honora started, colouring angrily; to be excused by Margaret Henderson was indeed bitter.

"And because of her surmise she has been doing a portion of your work during the whole of this term. Margaret is an exceedingly warm-hearted girl."

"Oh!" said Honora, dizzily.

"It will not do to speak to her about it, as she has rather a sensitive, delicate nature, and hates to be found out in her good works."

"Am I the recipient of good works?"

"But I should put it right if I were you. She has been taking up a duty that really belongs to you, and she is already overburdened with her own."

"It shall be put right."

Agonized pride smarted in Honora's eyes and cheeks.

"And if I were you I would not lose Florie. What is it worth to the world if a man save his own soul and lose his neighbour's?"

"It shall be put right," reiterated Honora, with scarlet cheeks.

"As to your misfortune, we all share that; and most of us call it our pride and our privilege to work."

"Yes?"

"Give a thing a different name and it alters its complexion. Shakespeare was wrong when he said that about the rose."

"I believe I like the work," said Honora, now convinced through the mere process of expression that this

was the case; "but it is not the career I would have chosen."

"That experience is as common as death."

"Perhaps it is."

"For my part, I deliberately choose the common experience."

"Do you mean you do not aspire?"

A smile lightened the whole of Lucilla's face.

"I have my aspirations," she said.

"*I* have been very ambitious," said Honora, with scant comprehension.

"*Anybody* can run up into a long weed," retorted Lucilla.

"Oh, what do you mean?"

"That your ambition is trashy."

Honora accepted the criticism in silence. She had the kind of noble pride which can take an adverse judgment without argument. Lucilla knew nothing about her, of course; but there was an unhesitating decision in her verdict which indicated keen insight. Moreover, under the storms and stress of the last months—the wholesale crowding of experience into a small space—the memory of the Greek myth project ran already like the tinkle of a dying brook. Under Lucilla's words it ceased.

"Tell me about *your* ambition," said she.

There was unconscious flattery in the stress on the pronoun. But it sprang from genuine feeling. Honora loved the girl.

Lucilla hesitated; all her face deepened. And at the moment there was a slight unconscious deviation of the

steady grey eyes towards a particular spot in the room. Honora followed the glance, which had been as involuntary as the movement of a needle to the magnet. Her eyes alighted with Lucilla's on the portrait of a man.

"There is always a man in the case!" thought she, discontentedly.

Lucilla seemed by no means in a hurry to disclose the nature of her aspirations, and a silence ensued, during which she sat with downcast lashes and reticent lips, while Honora stared gloomily at the portrait. Lucilla's heart, to tell the truth, was beating rather rapidly. Whenever the thought of the subject of that portrait entered her mind she was arrested; somewhere in her universe a great note sounded.

Above the portrait was a second object, the sight of which conveyed a shock to Honora. This was a crucifix. It was not of very handsome or expensive material and had probably been cheaply purchased in some foreign town. But it was realistic and had the artistic beauty which was first thrown into the subject by early devoutness, and which has lingered in the majesty of association. Above it on a scroll were the words "Ecce Homo," beneath it an inscription:

"This have I done for thee;
What hast thou done for Me?"

In addition to the sacredness of the common association, the figure was fraught to Honora's mind with a particular burden of memory; the outstretched arms and drooping head thus elevated in the corner of the girl's bare room

affected her as a visible protest, a silent command intensified by reproach. Stealthily into the little chamber seemed to creep the familiar fragrance of her father's saint-like nature—a keen reminder of humble sacrifice. How was it that the rejected and scorned idea—that exploded notion of by-gone generations!—had met her here again in these new surroundings, and in close proximity to this modern-minded girl?

Honora's gloomy stare changed gradually into a distinct frown. And then her eyes slid from the crucifix and fastened on the portrait below. While looking at one face the eye of her mind saw another. She too possessed a portrait. And at this moment she had visions of the picture of Leslie Lyttleton lying face downwards in the drawer of her bureau at home and locked up in disgrace. Then, since no answer to her question appeared to be forthcoming and since this recollection of Leslie was exceedingly disspiriting, she rose to shake off the impression, and walked up to the picture and looked at it. She found the face remarkable. She thought it must be the head of a notable of some kind. The picture was almost in profile; the lines of the head were very free and generous; there was a fine intellectuality in the brow; the nose was strong and dogged, and the lower part of the face gave a particular impression of force, while the eyes and brows threw out an unexpected suggestion of sensitiveness and idealism. It was the head of a resolute fighter,—virile, powerful,—yet the whole effect was of a deep humanness, and the general expression quiet and kindly. Taken altogether, the head in its rough strength, its agile and vigorous pose, its

living modernity, was an extraordinary contrast in significance to the fainting figure above it.

Lucilla, intensely conscious of her movements, remained on the sofa. She felt like a child playing the game of "Now it burns—now it is cold!" and having every consciousness of where the secret lies hidden.

"Who is this?" asked Honora.

"That?" returned Lucilla, rising and walking after her just to gain time—she knew not for what. "That is the portrait of one of the leaders of modern thought."

She spoke as though the fact were known to fame. Honora, who habitually disliked to acknowledge ignorance, did not do so now. She turned away and, still uneasily conscious of her own particular portrait at home—fallen like Dagon in the house of the gods—began to draw on her gloves.

"I wish——" she began.

"Well, what?" asked Lucilla.

"That we could do without men—*altogether*." The last word was emphatic, and she was busy now with the whole fourteen buttons.

"It would be an immense simplification of life—if that is desirable," returned Lucilla. "The old Fathers said something of the kind concerning that fair evil—woman."

"Cowards!" said Honora. "They made her the scapegoat of their own vileness."

Honora naturally felt bitter against the Fathers.

"Possibly. We need not precipitate ourselves into the same error. I prefer to think out the problem fairly."

But the mention of the Fathers had drawn Honora's attention again to the crucifix. Half fearful of giving offence or of showing indelicate curiosity, she pointed to it timidly.

"I am surprised to see that here," said she, slowly.

Lucilla looked at it reverently.

"It is the idea which of all others I desire to keep present with me," said she, quietly: "'Behold the *Man.*'"

"Yes?" said Honora, with increasing interest.

"The figure stands for Humanity. In its majesty and suffering it stands to me for all that accumulated experience—so hardly won—to which I was born the fortunate Heir, but to which when I was so born I had added nothing."

"I'm afraid I do not understand; it sounds rather mystical to me."

Honora tutored her tongue not to speak coldly; she was too sincerely desirous to win Lucilla's friendship and to atone for her own mistakes to permit the rise of antagonism now.

"Do you not? I am one of those who count myself '*in the foremost ranks of time.*' That is very beautiful. But behind me—through the long ages—what agony and struggle to acquire the accumulated knowledge and power which makes life full of lovely and dignified possibilities! History is a very living page to me. Can I accept the inheritance so won for me lightly?"

She passed her finger with a kind of solemn tenderness over the embossed words:

> "*This have I done for thee;*
> *What hast thou done for Me?*"

"And if," she continued, gently, "such agony and struggle lie behind, what agony and struggle are with us still! Go down any street of the less fashionable resorts of London and see if you find no reflection from that broken form! '*In the foremost ranks of time*'—it is because of the immensity of the inheritance we have received that the measure of our responsibility and of the claim laid upon us is so great."

Honora closed her eyes giddily. She was perfectly silent for several moments. "*In the foremost ranks of time!*" That was *her* favourite conception of herself; but what a distance between her reading of the position and Lucilla's!

"I wish I knew where you get your thoughts—your way of looking at things," said she, when she was able to speak.

Lucilla did not answer for a moment.

"Some come to it of themselves," said she, softly and evasively.

But Honora noticed that involuntarily she had stretched out her fine little finger again and was passing it slowly, thoughtfully, round the rim of the portrait.

"I have felt myself at fault about things lately," said Honora, humbly.

Lucilla surveyed the handsome face softened to unusual beauty by this mood. She changed her tone to a half-caressing gaiety.

"It would be pleasant, wouldn't it, if we had a sort of Bradshaw's Guide to Life?" said she, coming a little nearer. "I'm afraid there isn't such a thing. But will

you come with me one evening where you can hear some new things for yourself?"

"Of course I will come," said Honora. And she stooped to kiss Lucilla's cheek.

CHAPTER VII.

THAT conversation with Lucilla Dennison was a turning-point in Honora's career. It marked, for one thing, the beginning of a conspicuous success in her work as an educationalist.

Next morning when she waked and remembered Lucilla's new bearing towards her, a pleasant and comforting ray mingled with her thoughts. So accustomed had she become to gloom and coldness, that the idea of even one friend's support almost sufficed to recall the old radiant sense of happiness. Having made up her mind to step out of her self-imposed imprisonment, Honora was quite inclined to find as much enjoyment as she could in a sunny serviceableness. Her ideas were already busy with "reforms;" to reorganize and plan was a natural exercise of her powers; even now, as she put up the thick plaits of her hair with quick white fingers, she was mentally plunging her eager organizing faculty into affairs and shaping her first step. The late conversation with Lucilla gave a special tincture to her ideas, nor was she uninfluenced by Margaret Henderson's taunt about routine.

"The initial step," said she to herself, as she clasped

her belt about her comely waist, "is to call the teachers into my private room and to find out what each has got at the back of her mind. *There* lies my reserve army—my power—of course."

There was not a touch of the niggard about Honora's nature, and when she had made up her mind to a thing she performed it generously and without any underhand shame in her change. But amongst the under-mistresses was a subdued tumult when they received Honora's first shy invitation to tea and to a school conference in her room. No one knew how to take it; but it was discovered that Lucilla was on the Head-mistress's side.

When the great occasion came round, Lucilla, who was, of course, in Honora's confidence, was deputed by her, as first-mistress, to open the little meeting; Margaret Henderson was gently but firmly placed in a position of honour as chairman. Honora herself, with burning cheeks and a light of soft excitement in her eyes, took a position by the side of the table; a group of half a dozen under-teachers, shy, curious, and expectant, sat opposite. Lucilla stood up behind the table and the candles, and leaned her head a little forward towards the audience and began to speak, first shyly, then eagerly.

Every one was conscious that the occasion was a great one, and no one was surprised when Lucilla informed them that changes were contemplated in the school, and that these would take the shape of certain educational innovations.

In their educational undertaking it was obvious, she said, that a sort of holocaust had first to be offered up

—in the shape of routine work—to received ideas, to parents, to the Committee, and the necessary drudgery of learning. As far as this routine work went, the school was undoubtedly doing admirably. But a certain lack had been felt; indeed, some uneasiness had tormented the consciences of the teachers because they suspected that their best strength was not being put forth.

The truth was that it was just where the routine work left off that the great opportunity began; because here was the occasion for the use of the fruitful gift of individual originality in tuition. Yet here it was that they had found the great lack. The routine work of course trained the bodies and furnished the minds of the children; no doubt they might say that over and above was a constant interfusing with the routine of the collected influence of the teaching idea—the something *whole* which is always greater than the mere sum of the parts; and this was excellent and not to be lost sight of; but when the best was said, there had been no direct instruction in the application of training to Life itself.

In Lucilla's opinion the thing conspicuously left out by Routine was—*the exercise of the children's judgment and thought upon things directly touching Life and Conduct.*

Honora speaking immediately after Lucilla, said she was in thorough agreement with her first-mistress. And in order to make a preliminary suggestion, she was about to propose a progressive series of weekly lessons to be given to every class in the school on the lines of that "HeimatsKunde" which Miss Dennison had learnt about during a term spent in a German girls' school; these

classes were to be organized by the teachers in common, and opportunity given to each teacher in turn to handle the subject from her own particular point of view. The classes were to be called "The English Citizen," and the object of them would be, by simple instruction in facts—in facts collected from all sides of a question—to draw out of the children's own minds a fair estimate of the reality of their own position in regard to the society in which they lived, and the material for judgment on what constitutes just personal conduct.

Here an eager teacher with a face like a bright-eyed bird asked what kind of subjects would be treated in the classes.

"Why," said Honora, "we must take care to make them simple. We have to draw out the children's own powers of making a right judgment, and we must be careful not to impose any theories of our own. We must deal only with subjects suitable to their undeveloped lives and mental power."

"Yes," said Lucilla, "we don't want to tell them what *we* think, but to put them into a position to think for themselves—when they are old enough for real problems to touch them."

"I thought," said Honora, "for instance, that caste or class-feeling would be a very good subject in a school full of girls."

"You would, I suppose," said the bird-faced teacher, standing up in her excitement, "show them the relations of all classes to the common and general life?"

"I should show them the relation of different parts to the whole life of a nation," said Margaret Henderson.

"All that would come in under the head of 'citizen,'" said Honora.

"It would train them," said a thoughtful-looking girl, "into a habit of deference to others:—it would give them the predisposition towards it."

"Yes, indeed!" cried Lucilla. "When I think of the mark of supercilious contempt stamped on the faces of boys and girls who have nothing but their fathers' incomes to recommend them!"

"I said," remarked Honora, "that each ought to treat every subject from her own special point of view. I shall expect our mathematician and our logician to do great things in their own lines. Then, of course, we ought to have a scheme of subjects; and there are plenty of other projects to be thought of."

A rustle of excitement ran through the group; each girl turned out to be eager with an idea of her own. That evening was the beginning of a great uplift in the school—of a genuine revival. It became necessary to arrange evenings for the sketching out and comparison of work—so much, it seemed, had been missed out of the education of the children. These evenings were always held in Honora's room, and were occasions for cakes and tea-drinking, and laughter as well. A glow of energy expanded the nature.

It was, indeed, astounding to Honora to find how suddenly the dead and heavy surroundings had started into life. Every morning she sprang up to fresh interest, and at the end of a fortnight was rapidly taking her place as one of the most active and resourceful Head-mistresses in London. She had always been a very natural woman

underneath her "superiority;" frankly, she loved power, and when once she had discovered the sweetness of exercising it legitimately, she entered into the change with zest. She was utterly without the ascetic or self-sacrificing spirit; the new departure which was so great a boon to the school was pure enjoyment to her; she found it a pleasant direction of activity to useful ends; there was no strain or self-torment in the matter at all. One thing surprised her, and that was to find how many educational ideas leapt into her brain once she had set it to the work; this fact lent the delightful sense of adequacy to the problem before her.

"Isn't it amazing," said she to Lucilla in one of the delicious unbent moments, "to think that just a set of girls as we, in effect, are, should have such a splendid work intrusted to us! I had no idea that I should find so much in it, such a world of interest—such—*scope!*" She laughed a little at herself as she used the familiar word. "All sorts of things seem to be breaking down—in my own nature I mean—and new life flowing everywhere."

"Yes," said Lucilla, "it is so."

She was in Honora's room; they were writing, but the occasion was really one of leisure.

"You see," added Lucilla, absently, and slowly dipping her pen in the ink, "that is our method—to put what we *think* into everything we have to *do*: 'the duty that lies nearest to us' transformed—that is all. Not to go fussing round. It makes us very strong."

Honora stared at her. She was impressed by the idea that Lucilla was quoting—talking from memory.

"Lucilla! What are you referring to? Who are—'*we*'? What do you mean?" she asked.

Lucilla blushed and opened her eyes.

"Is there anything at the back of it? Didn't you find it all out for yourself? Did somebody tell it you?" Honora's questions fell thick.

Lucilla, still blushing, had a smile on her lips.

"It is," she answered, evasively, "a secret that—several people hold."

Honora looked at her a moment in silence; then she remembered the portrait hanging on her friend's wall. *That*, no doubt, would prove a clue to much in Lucilla's history and point of view! She was persuaded that Lucilla's firm little hand was somehow greatly in touch with the exterior world; the portrait probably had to do with the matter. In short, she threw down her own pen, pushed aside all her papers, and assumed a most natural demeanour.

"Lucilla," said she, coaxingly, her mouth with the short upper lip and pretty fulness looking extraordinarily bewitching, "I really cannot endure a secret—that is, when I'm not in it myself. *Do* tell me."

"Fudge. Did I say there was a secret? A Headmistress ought to be above such things," said Lucilla, engrossing herself with her papers.

"But I'm not. At least not when school hours are over. Just now I'm nothing but a girl."

"This," said Lucilla, writing away with a subtle smile on her face, "is a most extraordinary lapse. I thought you were sixth classic—or something elevated of that kind."

"No," said Honora, stretching herself, her arms above her head, her feet well out from her chair; "somehow I'm not sixth classic any more. I am just Honora Kemball, ætat twenty-four. And I want to put away our books and to run round the school-room or skip. Lucilla, will you have a game of battledore and shuttlecock with me in the gymnasium and—*afterwards* tell me the secret?"

Honora suddenly threw herself over the table and brought her face, glowing and red and coaxing, near her friend's.

"I'll have a game of battledore—but I won't tell the secret," said Lucilla.

"I'll order coffee and queen cakes! *Then* you will tell!"

"Not I."

Lucilla jumped up and began to dance about the room. She was a tiny thing. Honora was considerably larger. She took an unfair advantage. Springing from her chair, she darted on her companion, caught her in her arms and held her tight.

"Now tell!" said she.

It was extraordinary what might happen in the Headmistress's room now it was no longer sealed to the Superior Person.

"Oh, have mercy!" cried Lucilla, "I was always a bit of a thing. I shall break if you squeeze too tight."

"Lucilla," said Honora, solemnly, "I now remember that you *promised* to tell. You did—when I came to your room. A promise is a promise."

"Sometimes it's a mistrust."

"No, it isn't. My bond—my bond! I'll have my bond!"

"Loose me," said Lucilla—"perhaps."

"Well, now," said she, when she was free, "I will explain that it is too late for this term. I had not forgotten my promise—does one ever forget one's rash moments? But your new school plans have taken up the whole of our time. At the beginning of next term, in the early autumn, you shall know."

With that, in spite of her superior physical strength, Honora was perforce obliged to be content.

CHAPTER VIII.

EARLY next autumn, when the term had recommenced, Lucilla informed Honora that an opportunity had occurred, and that she could, if she liked, accompany her that evening.

"Well! Where are we going?"

"Oh, you will see. Why be impatient to anticipate events?"

When Honora found herself seated by Lucilla's side in a large hall that was at present three-parts empty but was rapidly filling with people, she felt just a little excited. It was the first relief from school routine that she had allowed herself since her arrival in London; besides, Lucilla had vouchsafed absolutely no information as to the nature of the entertainment. She looked round about her with interest.

"Not a very distinguished set," said she; "but there are some remarkably good faces."

In spite of the change in her attitude towards the school-work and the loosing of her faculties from rigidity to sunny activity under Lucilla's influence, Honora was still Honora. Lucilla had drawn out the best part of her nature; she had not altered it. Honora's main position remained the same, nor was her opinion about the event that had driven her from home changed. Her intercourse with her father was limited to regular letters —tender upon his side, gently respectful upon hers.

Looking round now upon the audience that was fast collecting in the hall, she seemed to discover a certain common quality in the faces—with exceptions, of course. She seemed to distinguish the trace of an intellectual or at least strenuous life, and a particular absence of *ennui*; many looked tired, none looked bored. There were also evidences of something specially intimate and binding in their acquaintanceship one with another. It was almost possible to pick out the mere curiosity-seekers from the gathering. For the rest, the assemblage was difficult to classify absolutely; there was even an infusion of fashion and Philistinism side by side with the workman's jacket. Honora, quite in the old style, contented herself with remarking that they were not in the least like *her* "set."

So far the platform, which had been empty when they entered, had not attracted her attention; she was recalled from her wandering glances by hearing a man's voice declaring the meeting to be open and requesting the lecturer to read his paper.

The tones were unmistakable. Honora jumped as

though she had been shot, and her eyes, wide open and almost terrified, anxiously sought the platform.

The voice that had shocked her was Leslie Lyttleton's. She found him standing upon the raised dais exactly opposite, occupying the position of chairman of the meeting. Their glances met, and a look of comical amazement shot into his face.

Honora, hot, vexed, and almost faint with horror, shrank back in her chair. Both she and Leslie had been —willingly or unwillingly—thinking each of the other since their interview in the rectory garden, and for a few seconds there was a furious throbbing of pulses on either side at the unexpected encounter.

"Who is in the chair?" demanded she, unreasonably and passionately, of Lucilla.

"Leslie Lyttleton," was the reply.

"*Leslie* Lyttleton!" repeated Honora. "Do you know him?"

"I do."

"Where are we? What is the meeting? Is it *religious?*"

A ghastly doubt made for the moment the image of Leslie reel in her sight upon the platform.

Lucilla slightly laughed.

"We are in a Socialist hall, and this is a Socialist gathering, and a Socialist lecture is about to be given. Some people affirm that Socialism *is* religion."

Honora bit her lip. She could hardly say that the information relieved her, though, indeed, the figure of her friend on the platform stood firmer to her gaze.

The lecture began, but Honora, for a few moments,

neither saw nor heard anything. The word "Socialism" represented to her mind an obscure kind of ruffianism. She glanced again at the audience, and now read violent revolution and street rioting in the faces whose type had struck her as remarkable. Returning to the platform, she found Leslie sitting with his arms over the table, his fingers tearing a little bit of paper to pieces, and his head slightly bent.

"Ashamed of himself, of course," said she, with a scorn which was a pure bit of deliberate self-mystification.

In the agitation of her discovery Honora missed the opening portion of the lecture, but not more than that, for her attention was presently caught and then riveted. She raised her eyes and looked at the speaker.

He was a man of something over thirty, of small build, and of no superfluous flesh, and with a fine, rugged head. Honora remarked the evidences of culture in voice, manner, and diction; she was sensitive to these things. She caught, also, the familiar air of the student. This, she thought, is the kind of man who makes himself sure of his ground. But there was something over and above that—something which was absolutely new to her. Not only had the lecturer an unusual mastery over words, a clearness and simplicity of thought and a fearlessness of expression, that drove the sentences out in well-directed blows, but in the matter of his lecture he himself had an indomitable faith. Deft and ingenious in the logical application of argument he might be, but the main quality was burning conviction and absolute sincerity. To a girl accustomed to the superior,

didactic manner, the scholarly hesitation and careful non-self-committal of a Cambridge lecturer, this fire of sincerity was something astounding. The kind of mental integrity which is called conviction is rare—it is something very different from learned acquirement. Honora had never come across it before; she was obliged to listen whether she wished it or not. Moreover, there was humour and racy originality in the turn of some of the lecturer's phrases pointing to a very deep streak of the quality that should be common to all men, but which has been almost lost to the race in the processes of civilization—and that is of *humanness.* With this Honora was somewhat at cross-purposes, and the humour brought a frown to her brow.

However, she was now listening with all her ears. By and bye she felt herself turning hot and giddy. She had never heard a Socialist lecture before, and she was instantly struck by the coincidence in thought between her father and this determined leader of the disorderly advanced. Radically, their position was the same. The recognition of the fact threw her into a tumult of angry agitation. How *could* her father have come into contact with these strongly-flavored ideas? The blood flamed into her cheeks, and her indignant eyes sought, first Leslie, who did not look up, and then Lucilla.

"It is a plot," she thought in her wrath; "it must be a plot between them to make me come and listen to this ill-bred nonsense."

For Honora, impressed though she was by the man's power and sincerity, remained intellectually quite undisturbed; her temper, not her mind, was moved. She

marvelled that the audience could sit still under the unmitigated sentences. It was a point of added vexation that honestly she could not treat this man of pronounced views with intellectual scorn. His knowledge of history and economics was as profound as his logic was merciless. This was no empty declaimer. Honora knew a trained mind when she met one.

Just now he was touching upon the attitude of the church towards democracy. A slight smile playing over his features, and responded to by a rustle of applause from the audience, presaged one of those sallies that made Honora more furious than anything else.

"Even the Bishops believe and tremble," said he, before entering on a smashing indictment of the timidity and hedging of the church in face of popular movements.

"Grossly impertinent!" muttered Honora, driven by her hatred of democracy to champion the cause of a church she had lightly laughed to scorn in former days.

"Who is the lecturer?" she whispered to Lucilla.

"His name is Paul Sheridan."

"And who is Paul Sheridan?"

"A leader of modern thought."

Of course! The same head whose likeness hung on the walls of Lucilla's sitting-room. She looked at him with renewed interest. The upshot of the contemplation was vexation on her part at her own inability to catalogue him. He belonged to no category with which she was familiar.

During the rest of the lecture she sat with thumping heart and her hands clenched into two kid-gloved but

very real fists. She disdained to lift her eyes and to meet Leslie's, but kept paling under his imagined gaze.

The lecture being concluded, a debate began. This was a rather extraordinary commingling of astute cleverness on the part of a few with the usual randomness of suggestion on the part of the many. There was considerable heat and fire on all sides, and what was wanting in reasonableness was made up for by energy. Occasionally an evident sense of personal injury carried speakers away and disorder occurred; on which occasions Leslie found it necessary, as chairman, to ring a little bell.

Honora was forced again to admire the lecturer. He was equal to the management of a rather obstreperous crowd, his repartee being swift and clever and always winning to the heart, while his more serious replies were clear and ready, and his patience kindly; on the whole, he was more admirable in reply even than in the lecture. If she could but have despised him!

Once she glanced at Lucilla. Rather to her surprise Lucilla's head was downcast and the features sad and pale. Honora had rather expected to find her looking exhilarated.

The debate being over, people began to disperse, and Honora rose with the rest; the platform was already vacated, and the natural and proper course was surely for Mr. Lyttleton to present himself. No one appeared, however, save Mr. Sheridan, who came forward to greet Lucilla; and the latter took the opportunity of introducing him to that one of his audience who was least delighted with his oratory. Upon coming down from

the platform. Mr. Sheridan's manner had completely lost the joyous militancy which had characterized it; his bearing was now very quiet, modest, and retiring. Shyness as an accompaniment of ability and force of character has a charm, it rather set off than obliterated the strong lines of his head and jaw. For a moment, however, it misled Honora; perhaps the man was not quite what he had looked up there on the dais; there was something almost appealing in his eyes. Encouraged by this hint of trepidation, she ventured a remark that struck her as final.

"If everything were equally divided to-day, to-morrow there would be rich and poor again!" said she, with her condescending air.

The grave timidity of the eyes looking into her own changed instantly to amusement.

"It would be rather difficult to divide some things equally, wouldn't it? Main Drains, for instance," said he.

Honora started. She blushed.

"Things of that kind *have* to belong to everybody," she snapped.

"Well! Try and extend the communal quality of Main Drains to all things."

In the excited state of her feeling this was more than she could bear, and traces of her discontent appeared in her manner; Mr. Sheridan instantly withdrew from the interview, apologizing, as he did so, for any offence he might inadvertently have given, by a stiff but courteous bow, and a smile of such inimitable sweetness that it made matters worse by placing her hopelessly in the wrong.

"Ruffian!" was the illogical comment with which she relieved her anger.

Honora, drawn up to her full height, now glanced impatiently over the crowd. Lyttleton she discovered with his broad back turned to her and his shoulders inclined towards a stout round woman who was discoursing with volubility. Honora rather gratuitously assumed that Leslie's preoccupation was feigned.

"Let us go!" said she to Lucilla; "it is suffocatingly hot."

In the dark tumult of the streets her heat cooled down to depression. She followed Lucilla along the crowded pavement to a corner where omnibuses continually drew up to carry away the knots of passengers who, as continually, renewed themselves. Here the two girls stood silently side by side waiting with the rest, the roar of the city about them. Lucilla was still pale, downcast, and silent, but an incident occurred which seemed to startle her at once into a markedly changed condition. For, in spite of her force of character, she was built on the usual lines of a woman, with a swifter responsiveness to influences than the other sex and with nervous centres more easily perturbed.

"Miss Dennison!"

Honora turning round saw a man raising his hat and holding out his hand to Lucilla. His face with the street light flaring in it was plainly to be seen; it was dark and foreign; he was a tall man, slenderly even elegantly built. The countenance was gentle and cultivated, and it was beautified now by a peculiarly luminous smile. Honora might have found it attractive; but

she habitually hated foreigners, and, indeed, preferred all her acquaintances of the male sex to be built upon rather conventional lines, so that, as she expressed it, "you might know where you had them."

"Ah! Monsieur d'Auverney! Is it you?"

Lucilla rather timidly extended her hand even—Honora thought—reluctantly. At the same time there were evidences in her face of subdued excitement.

"You are out alone! Can I not help you? May I not escort you?"

It was excellent English, and spoken with only the slightest accent.

"Thank you, I have a friend with me, and the 'bus will be here directly."

"You have been——?"

The stranger with an expressive gesture indicated the street out of which they had just come.

"Yes. Paul Sheridan has been speaking."

The stranger shrugged his shoulders, drew himself up with a swift, natural movement, and shook back his handsome head. For he was handsome—Honora saw it now—unusually handsome, and he looked particularly so at the moment with a kind of inspired disdain animating his features.

"I wish that you understood us—Mr. Sheridan—better. He and you are working to the same end. It is only the method——"

"That differs?" The Frenchman smiled. A row of even teeth glittered under his moustache. "I trust *you*, Miss Dennison."

The stress on the pronoun excluded Mr. Sheridan.

Honora was surprised to see that Lucilla dropped back to the pale, depressed manner.

"I wish I could induce you to visit our place!" he continued.

"Oh, well! Perhaps I shall, one day"—the tone was hurried and nervous; "but I have very little time. Honora! Here is our 'bus."

The stranger disappeared, and from the confusion of traffic Lucilla selected the right vehicle—by a fortunate chance, as it appeared to her less experienced companion—and the two girls got in and sat down silently side by side.

"That Frenchman does not seem to have a good opinion of Mr. Sheridan. But, dear me, Lucilla!" said Honora, tartly, "I never saw a man who is less likely to be affected by other people's opinion than to-night's lecturer."

Lucilla making no reply, Honora turned her face to the window to watch the street figures and the little bits of woeful drama that flashed to her in the partial light. Here a solitary form near the brilliant window of a gin palace, fighting a losing battle in the grip of vice; there a whispering pair whose shoulders were shaped to so much degradation in their common secret that the eyes shrank involuntarily away; here an organ-grinder handling music for a drunken girl, who danced in horrible isolation while the indifferent crowd passed on; there a poverty-stricken woman counting coppers in her palm while her blear-eyed child stared at the gaslight shining in her fevered, haggard face. Other figures there were of happier and more innocent suggestion, but all, as it

seemed to Honora, tracked in that dreadful city by the silent foot of inevitable disaster. Suddenly she laid her hand on Lucilla's. Two men were threading their way amongst the foot passengers side by side. The broader of the two forms was Lyttleton's, and the slighter was Sheridan's. The girls watched them until they were lost in the crowd, and then Honora leaned back and closed her eyes.

"I'm sure I don't know whose ears I want to box—whether my own, Leslie's, or the lecturer's," thought she.

CHAPTER IX.

"THAT was a handsome woman with Lucilla Dennison," said Sheridan to his companion as the vehicle rolled past them.

"She is an old friend of my own," returned Lyttleton.

"Indeed? I did not see you speak to her."

"I was uncertain as to my reception," said Lyttleton.

"Is that so?" The tone was rather rallying.

"Not that—not what you think," returned Lyttleton, too emphatically to be reassuring. "But it is a unique story. Come into my rooms and hear it."

They turned from the main road and threaded some dull by-streets into a square with dusty trees and patches of green impounded like a strayed piece of country between bars of iron. The near branches sparkled in

the gaslight, and in the darkness beyond some unforgotten remnant of natural melody was shaken out by these poor harpers from the forest.

Leaving the square, they came into a more frequented street where were a block of chambers. Before one of the outer doors Lyttleton paused, and this being opened, the two mounted the stairs together to the fourth story. Here they exchanged the dim light for a bright, well-furnished room; and here by the fire—lit even so early in the season—Sheridan sat down to hear Lyttleton's story of the rector and his daughter. He told it well, with sympathy, even with emotion.

"What will he do with the Tithe?" said Sheridan sharply when he had finished; "not let it go back into the landlord's pockets, I hope?"

"No. He is a churchman through and through and considers Church Property sacred. Particularly the Tithe. I believe he will no more surrender it than he will use it for himself!"

"Then what is the upshot?"

"He collects it as usual, but every farthing goes for church, or church schools, or charitable purposes."

"That's better. How did his Bishop take it, I wonder?"

"Oh, his Bishop sneered condescendingly. He professed to fear lest the action might seem a movement of self-exaltation at the expense of the general church body. The rector's reply was, however, given in such a spirit of sweetness and retiredness from self that in the end the Bishop let Mr. Kemball take his own way. You see the rector is deeply respected by the dignitaries of the church,

and he could hardly be snubbed too severely for a desire to follow Christ literally."

"If the example caught on, it would be awkward for some of our church magnates, I suspect. But now, look here! Can't we work something out of this?"

Lyttleton's eyes laughed as he quietly fingered his beard.

"Mr. Kemball did not come at his ideas through our movement," said he.

"I know that. But it helps to show that our movement has come out of everything else."

"You are perfectly scandalous, Sheridan! You think of nothing but seizing the opportunity!"

Sheridan smiled.

"What else is there to seize?" said he.

Lyttleton laughed again.

"I grant our movement *has* come out of everything else. 'The wind bloweth as it listeth.'"

"That is so. But there is nothing against our putting up a windmill or two to catch it."

"Sheridan! You are shamelessly prosaic. We are told that Socialism is a dream."

"Let it be a dream, then. When I get a good dream, I'm not satisfied until I've done something to cage it."

Lyttleton turned and silently regarded his friend with amused affectionate eyes. Sheridan, unconscious of his look, was staring rather gravely into the fire. The light played over his face, which was always eminently expressive. Leslie had found in the man something unique; he had strongly attached himself to him in a selective and enduring friendship—one founded upon a profound

compatibility at the bottom of two natures otherwise apparently dissimilar.

Paul Sheridan's history was of the kind which, in the case of an ordinary man, might have sunk him into a complete rut of the commonplace. His birthplace was London—a fact in itself indicative of an absence of romantic or striking background. Moreover, he came of a family occupying a respectable but narrow position in the lower middle class. He was born into a world which presented from the beginning a prosaic aspect; there was no glitter or colour of any sort in the opening years of his life; from any false idea, in his estimate of his own position in the environment in which he found himself, he was debarred—the brilliant, the unusual, the picturesque were wanting. The basis of things for him was prose. Again, he was familiarized early with the idea that the means for his existence, with all that such an existence might come to imply to himself, were to be won by his own application and effort.

That is a lonely thought, but it is one which has a fine effectiveness, and no child of the nation should be debarred from acquiring it.

Something, of course, Paul owed to ancestry. He came of good wholesome material, and brought into the world with him unusual mental powers. That he possessed a very deep imagination of a particularly masculine type no one probably suspected. Yet it was this hidden imaginativeness—this wide-sighted discriminating power of mental vision—which differentiated him from his fellow-men and gave him that unique quality which was destined to bear fruit in his life both for himself and

for others. A great characteristic such as this bears others in its train, and many unusual attributes both of heart and brain clustered round this one of his hidden imagination. Meanwhile, the uppmost thing was his prose.

Although Paul by his position missed the educational advantages common to a lad of the upper classes, he had his opportunities, and his early training led him to embrace them eagerly. What education he could lay hold of he took; from a child his mind ran into the business of acquiring knowledge and information, and very early gave indications of its special tastes, for from the age of thirteen onwards he found pleasure in collecting statistics and pasting or entering them into a book. A Fact was his delight. He liked to know the bearings of a thing, its present limits and powers of growth; he liked to test and examine, and he would watch from year to year how a thing developed, and would measure it in figures. All parts of life attracted him; the manœuvres of an army excited pleasurable mental feelings, and he would copy a battle-field out of a newspaper with tin soldiers and chessmen on a table, and perform the scientific part of the warfare over again in mimic evolutions with his toys. Science, too, he loved, because it showed him how things were done and how they had come about; but as he became older his particular intellectual quality showed itself in a passion for economics and history. He had passed every examination and competed for and won whatever prizes were open to general competition, and had earned enough money to go abroad and study for a time in Germany before he was twenty-one. But it was after that age that he began to make a mark as a student

of and writer on economics. Meanwhile, the business of earning his own living was always before him; he went into the dull daily duties of routine work with the same effectiveness and energy that he put into his self-chosen occupations. If anyone remarked upon his equal devotion to small things as to great, he looked surprised:

"How am I to know that the small things may not turn out to be great?" he would reply.

With this passion for detail and strenuous habit of living straight into the moment, it was to be expected that by the age of twenty-two Sheridan should find himself in a good position. He became confidential clerk in a first-rate business house, with a rising salary and the prospect of a pension or partnership in the end.

Just at this point, however, calamity overtook him. It is possible that, had it not been so, Sheridan might have fallen into mere successful routine and never have found the greater self which lay enshrined within that hidden and little suspected imaginative power. And yet the imaginative power was always there, and where there is gold, Life mines and probes until it is brought to the surface. She struck her pick now where he was most sensitive. He found himself under a charge of gross neglect amounting to dishonesty.

Sheridan had no means of disproving his guilt or in the least accounting for what had occurred. The real delinquent, a clever scamp, had so managed matters that the charge could neither be proved nor disproved against Sheridan. He was subjected to all the humiliation of an examination by his chiefs without coming off in it triumphantly.

Having regard to his immense services he was not discharged, indeed, he was grudgingly acquitted; but the eyes with which he was regarded became cold and changed.

The event shook Sheridan in every part of his nature, it was agony to his sensitiveness—a quality which underlay his masculine strength in unusual power, as it is sure to do in any highly gifted and well-developed creature. He saw himself rejected, condemned, and misjudged in those very qualities which he was conscious were of particular worth to the persons on whose behalf he had exercised them. Sheridan was an intensely proud man—proud in that silent, strong, unostentatious way which is better than humility. A vain man would have resorted to pettish resignation of his post as a protest against the indignity of suspicion. Sheridan did nothing of the kind. He argued to himself that such a step would be to surrender a part of his own position; what had happened was due, not to anything wrong in himself, but to the stupidity of his chiefs who mistrusted the quality of a man who had served them. He hated in a quite human, unsaint-like manner the fellow-clerk who had laid the trap for him, and despised from the bottom of his clever mind the idiocy of the employers who fell into it and misjudged him.

"But that's not my concern," said he; "if they are fools, there is no need why I should be one, too. If this had not happened, I should have gone on in this particular path, and I'm not going to be pushed out of it now."

So he went on—day by day, just as if it had not hap-

pened. So far went his will. But to his sensitiveness it remained agony. And under the hand of this suffering his imagination awoke and lifted him up. This was a time of an all-devouring energy of work to Sheridan; he wrote, lectured, studied, and he examined every possible phase of life that came before him. And suddenly through the eyes of his own suffering he saw—clearly, imaginatively, potently—the suffering of his fellow-men. It rolled up before him in an intensely vivid presentment that shook him to the heart. And with a man too wholesomely occupied to be tempted to dwell on the emotional side of life, this disturbance of the nature was genuine and profound, and the precursor of lasting results. He was not moved now to forget upon the morrow; the experience cut deep into his heart and formed the starting-point of a new departure. Out of the present emotional moment was born the Idea which he was hereafter destined to follow with increasing zest and persistence.

The Idea had two sides. He saw himself, in the first place, as the avowed servant of Humanity. And he saw Humanity, in the second place, as something capable of being effectively served. Humanity—those broken, disorganized, degraded shreds of it which flitted across his path every day of his life and which he viewed now with the new eyes of his own suffering—was pursued to his inner vision perpetually by the hopeful Figure of Redemption. Present to his view in the warped type was the *might have been;* and close upon that smote into his mind the determined *It shall be.*

The poetry of Sheridan's nature had been born in

pain, but it was of a high quality and bore no trace of emotional weakness. He first accepted with firm compliance his own particular burden of bitterness, and then threw it aside with the brief decision of one who perceived that the casual smart hardly signified in comparison with the daily breathing tragedy of broken, wasted life ever present to his knowledge.

The simplicity of the issue to all this unusual emotion was characteristic of the man. He merely registered a vow never to refuse any public duty great or small that might come in his way. Few have insight enough to perceive how far-reaching and strong is such a determination towards the singleness of duty; it was a clue to a quiet persistence in his methods that was in afterdays to prove somewhat provoking to less balanced minds, and was even to be the occasion of misunderstanding and false estimation.

Something, however, from the outside world was destined to be added to Sheridan's experience in this moment. He came into contact with the Socialistic idea, then crude, obscure, and hardly to be calculated upon in the sum of agencies. For half a century the stream of Socialism had run underground; it was just reissuing into the light of day. Sheridan met with some of its adherents, studied it in the works of Karl Marx, Proudhon, and other lesser but more modern exponents. His quick mind leapt to the idea, overhauled it, appropriated and changed it. It is not too much to say that Sheridan's conversion brought about a new era in the history of Socialism, a fresh phase of it which, lasting or not lasting in its particular form, was fitted to the needs of the

age which had brought it forth and was destined to be powerfully effective and influential within it.

Meanwhile, Sheridan had "dree'd his weird." By imperceptible degrees and by sheer persistence in duty he had regained his position in the estimation of his chiefs; finally a complete answer to the charge laid against him was suddenly brought to light; whereupon an ample apology, promotion, and compensation were offered him.

Sheridan, however, had lately felt that his occupation in a house of business—even one that paid Trade Union rates of wages to all its employés—was too cramping for him. It limited his opportunities, hampered and curtailed his spirit. He needed and sought a wider world in which to exercise his powers and freer occasions in which to pursue the now leading idea of his life. He resigned his position, therefore, and entered into the precarious but much more influential life of a journalist. Such had been his existence for a couple of years before he met with Lyttleton. At the time of his encounter with his future friend he was a well-known writer, not only in the newspapers, but also in the leading reviews, the peculiar turn of his political ideas rendering him invaluable to any editor anxious for the admixture of originality and glowing conviction amid the learned, stately, and less aggressive articles that make up the ordinary material.

The advent of Lyttleton into Sheridan's life was quickly followed by another pleasant event.

After a lecture on Socialism at a public hall in London, a young girl advanced from the audience towards him, and holding out her hand with a mixture of timidity

and fearless innocence in her bearing, informed Mr. Sheridan (who had accepted the small fingers tendered to him in shy gravity) that she wished to throw in her lot with him and his friends, because she believed that every word he had said was true.

Sheridan was touched, pleased, and embarrassed by the incident. Women moved a little outside his plane, and he was troubled by a feeling of the strange and unaccustomed in dealing with them. The girl—who seemed extraordinarily young—stood her ground with a patience and persistence that at least argued sincerity.

"I am older than I look. I intend—if you will have me—to be one of you," said she, quickly, when she remarked his hesitation.

The girl was Lucilla Dennison, and the incident, which had taken place some two or three years ago, marked her entrance upon the life of a Socialist. Lucilla brought to the cause qualities of her own. The movements of her mind were large, single, clear. She was clever—Sheridan was apt to be a little impatient with mediocrity, this being a quality he could not understand—and soon became a useful lieutenant of the movement, being regarded by the rest of the band as Sheridan's particular convert, while on her side she attached herself to him as her chosen guide. Sheridan always regarded himself as being in some measure responsible for Lucilla, but indeed there was amongst the little Band of Comrades an easiness and simplicity of intercourse born of coincidence of aim, which made the duty light. The aim was the diffusion of light and the acquirement of social knowledge; but the scope of the movement widened, and every

day opened out some fresher possibility and some new field for effort.

Meanwhile, there was in the character of Lucilla a region of reticence and reserved force which Sheridan felt that he did not touch. Occasionally he speculated upon this element of resistance in a girl so slight and enthusiastic, and so yielding to his lead in most things. But the speculation never went further than an interested thought or two. Lucilla was his very good comrade, and none could more reverently leave alone, than could Sheridan, the circle of reticence and reserve in another which he so pre-eminently respected in himself.

Lyttleton's friendship was a great gain. He brought with him an element of culture as a University man—of culture of a special quality in which Sheridan's education, thorough though it was in some respects, was wanting. Leslie's occupation in London was that of a Civil Servant, and this fact, together with certain of his characteristics, kept him a little in the background at a time when Sheridan was stepping more and more forward into public life. But on the whole the two men ran abreast in a generous give-and-take friendship. Both aimed more and more consciously at definitely throwing their ideas into administrative form, the gradual realization of Socialistic notions in legislation and in municipal control being the life-task which Sheridan, with the full concurrence of Lyttleton and others, placed before himself.

* * * * * * *

Lyttleton, who was still smiling at the evidences of his friend's habitual alertness after opportunity, stretched

his hand towards the mantle-shelf for a pipe and lights. He offered a box of cigarettes to Sheridan, who, however, shook his head and declined them.

"Lucilla Dennison introduced me to Miss Kemball after the lecture," said he, "and I saw at once she owed me a grudge. I hadn't the faintest idea why. Was it because of the part about the church?"

"Of course. Conceive the effect of your admonition on the daughter of a clergyman."

"But she does not agree with her father. She ought to have been glad."

"Well! It appears she wasn't. Did she say anything?"

"No; she looked it." Sheridan laughed softly. "I'm afraid she was very much offended with me indeed. However, I don't pretend to be a man to make favourable impressions upon women. I don't know how to do it. Of course, I wish I did, except that a perfect manner argues a wasted youth."

"Miss Kemball's manner can be very pronounced at times," said Lyttleton, gravely and with recollection.

"Oh, very! However," added Sheridan, "I believe I can pardon anything to anybody the moment I understand it."

"I believe you can. By the way, did you notice how pale Lucilla Dennison looked to-night?"

"Yes. I don't know what is coming over her," said Sheridan, frowning and pulling his moustache.

"No one can explain it if you cannot."

"I assure you I cannot. I haven't any direct clue. Sometimes I think she is disappointed with the move-

ment:—possibly with me. There *are* offences of course. The claim of the community upon one's service leaves little time for self-culture."

"But she should accept this."

"Yes; but I question if she sees why the idea of self-perfection has to be dropped by anyone whose social consciousness is enlarged. The pursuit of self-culture is a very expensive and all-absorbing affair. We have not the right or the time to undertake it as a prime object, while the whole race is enslaved to hard conditions. Our bit of work is to ease and lessen the general slavery and degradation. We can only do that by taking on ourselves some of the defects of servitude."

"We lose ourselves to find ourselves."

"I would suggest that we have no right to occupy ourselves with ourselves *at all.* I have no time and no heart for this self-culture. And as for Lucilla, I've offended her ignorantly, no doubt," said Sheridan. "But if she liked me once she ought to go on liking me."

"Sheridan, I don't suppose for one moment she has left off liking you."

"What is it all about, then?" Sheridan again slowly passed his hand—it was a lithe and rather graceful hand—over and over his moustache. "Unless, indeed—— Is it true that she has formed an acquaintance with Achille d'Auverney?"

"I don't know. I can hardly fancy it. You see personally I detest d'Auverney."

"I'm not sure that I detest anyone. But I don't agree with d'Auverney. The man's a patent absurdity. What does Lucilla want to foregather with him for?"

"You and he are on a different tack altogether."

"Well! I am, then. And I'd rather be. I don't understand why he should have an attraction for Lucilla."

"But it's astounding what a fascination the Red Cap has for a woman! They will run at the heels of any scamp who takes 'Liberty!' as his view-halloo."

"That is because they haven't got hold of the right thing. I can understand their running after Liberty. But Lucilla ought to know better. D'Auverney is no sort of a chap."

"D'Auverney is hot for violent revolution and you are against it. The former is the more picturesque."

"Lucilla isn't that sort. I'm against violent revolution because it defeats its own ends."

"Of course. Your genius, Sheridan, lies in your instinct after the trend of events."

Sheridan laughed.

"The most rigid conservative has that too—only somnambulistically. He finds himself moved on by the sheer impetus of events to the position of last century's advanced thinker. I've no doubt that Tom Paine's idea of 'Old Age Pensions' will be a future conservative electioneering cry, and that a conservative government will bring in the bill."

"I had an idea—a general sort of idea—about these things which I believe would work up well into a lecture," said Lyttleton.

"We shall be wanting one soon, and you might as well take it. What is the title? Will it work up into a tract?"

"Sheridan, you must know that this is an opera in

words. There are the Orchestra and Overture, the *Dramatis Personæ*, and the story in the songs."

"I'm afraid I don't see a tract in it then. But fire away."

Lyttleton had, it appeared, occupied some of his spare moments lately in contemplating the evidences of transition in the present phase of society, and in curiously speculating upon the elements that went to make up this whole effect of a social environment in the uneasy condition of solution—of change into something else. The spirit of the age was, he found, characterized by movement, by excessive movement as distinguished from periods of comparative stagnation, and was manifested in a variety of activities which, often apparently contradictory and being each one of them solvents, yet conveyed onward through this period of *Transition* some one dominant note which, in his opinion, was to be an essential element in the next more established phase. The idea had sprung into his mind upon his meeting with so living a survival of the Oxford movement in Honora's father: a survival which, as distinguished from mere persistence, had accommodated itself in his spirit to the modern call and the modern need. Lyttleton took, therefore, as his point of departure the Oxford movement in the earlier decades of the century, and, coupling with it the contemporaneous appearances of Chartism, of Carlyleism, of Christian Socialism, accepted them as manifestations of the early *Zeit-Geist*, conveying a note of abnegation of the individual self rather than the realization of the social self. *Viriliter age expectans dominum* was, he took it, the spirit of mediæval Re-

vivalism at Oxford, and though Carlyle's ideal differed and was wider, and that of Chartism and Christian Socialism was so again, yet in all of them was a similarity:—for, in each, a stern and splendid inspiration was limited by the individualistic tendency to a dogma, a tyranny, a programme, an attitude of personal benevolence.

Such spirits as Matthew Arnold and Clough he took next as forming a century influence, which, from particular characteristics, he would name "*La Maladie du Siècle.*" In them the dominant peculiarity was regret, the mourning of great souls destined to officiate at the sacrifice of a past that was beloved, and scarcely able to welcome the advent of a future whose strangeness and newness appeared cold and repugnant; yet from them had passed out the lasting note of regard to proved truth as the only certain criterion—a note to be taken up in splendour by the modern scientific spirit, with Clifford as a fine exponent, and Spinoza as a sort of intellectual ancestor. After this came, in his opinion, the Pagan spirit, so eminently a solvent.

"As revived in our era," said he, "this is anything but festive. It is sheer despair done into the best English by Pater and Swinburne. Side by side comes the Æsthetic feeling—a fastidious fuss about exquisite detail. Then comes the Revolt in Hope. Morris, you know—splendid old Morris! 'Then all *mine* and all *thine* shall be ours,' illustrated by Walter Crane. Brotherhood and hay-making. Lastly, we have Constructive Socialism—enthusiasm done into dry work. Finally, Realism, the crusade against shams. Blake, Ibsen, Zola,

Maupassant, Turgenieff, etc., etc., all the eminent unrespectables. And to cap all, we have Pseudo-Realism, the affectation of truth."

Lyttleton threw himself back in his chair, stretched out his feet to the fire, and looked at his friend with a challenging smile.

"Is that all?" asked Sheridan.

"Not all, but all I feel inclined to mention for the present. I've skipped ever so much."

"There's not any more just now?"

"Not for the present."

"I'm rather glad of that. And this is the Overture?"

"Yes. But I ought to have put Constructive Socialism last. I ought to have ended in the realization of the social self to which the whole leads up."

"Well, it's a very handsome gallimaufry, and I suppose Wagner could do it into music. I should like to hear the Century Orchestra. But now get on; I'm quite ready for the *Dramatis Personæ*."

"Oh, didn't I bring them in at the beginning?"

"Not at all. I tell you what, Lyttleton, having listened so far I'm not going to be put off with the Overture. I want the songs—the general stage behaviour."

"The stage behaviour? That is as it may be."

"By no means. I'm sure there's something feminine at the back of all this. There's a She in it somewhere. There always is. I want you to trot out that interesting creature, the century woman. You can't expect me to give her up."

Leslie drew his feet back, leaned forward in his chair, and placed his fingers together with a quick movement.

A dark flush came into his face, and he began to speak with cutting bitterness.

"She? The *Zeit-Geist* makes her, I suppose, out of the weaker, harder side of everything. You get her from the wrong side of Arnold—conceited, scornful; she takes up science in a glib surface way and thinks she has the final word on her tongue's tip; she plays with the Pagan spirit—delicately, of course, and without coarseness or offence. She assumes the æsthete and thinks fastidiousness a sign of elevation. In her pseudo-realism she affects the truth, and in her affectation of it shows herself a noodle."

Sheridan received this speech in silence. But on his lips hovered a smile compounded of amusement and kindliness. After the pause had lasted a few minutes, he spoke in a soft and even tender tone.

"I very shrewdly suspect that she has a fine, tall figure and a handsome face, with well-coloured cheeks and good eyes and eyebrows. Lyttleton! I'm afraid you admire Miss Kemball very much indeed."

Lyttleton frowned into the fire.

"Well, I must be off," said Sheridan. "I meant to have gone home early to work half the night over the leaflet against 'Leasehold Enfranchisement.' The subject is coming on in the House directly, and we ought to be beforehand with our information."

"Oh, damn the leaflet! It won't make any difference."

"On the contrary, it is very good business. That leaflet has got to be ready for the press to-morrow."

"Begone, then," said Lyttleton. "I'm in an ill-mood to-night."

"Then I'd better be off, of course."

No sooner, however, had the door closed behind him than he opened it again. He came back and sat down on the corner of the table.

"Lyttleton," said he without preliminary, "why not try and induce her to come again? Obviously, there is Lucilla Dennison's influence to count on."

Lyttleton stood on the hearth, both hands in his pockets and his eyes fixed on the carpet.

"There is a great deal in making up one's own mind," added Sheridan, with his warm, kind smile.

And then he got off the table, nodded good-night, and vanished.

CHAPTER X.

WHEN Lyttleton stretched out his hand for a match to apply to his bedroom candle, it trembled a little.

"He is partly right," said he, staring thoughtfully at the wick; "a mind made up is a force in itself. Now, I have never been able to distinguish whether the scene in the rectory garden was the beginning of the union of souls or the precise reverse."

He took up the candle, but did not move off. It guttered in his hand and sent flickering lights and shadows about the room while he mentally ran up and down every possible gamut of doubt and hesitation. The memory of the tumultuous heart-beating—half pleasant, half painful—with which he had involuntarily greeted Honora's appearance in the hall still warmed him. He

felt the attraction of a personality which could so disturb his own. At the same time hearts are known to leap at the advent of a foe as well as of a friend. The great thing, thought Lyttleton, is to distinguish.

Unlike his friend Sheridan—whose power of swift decision was a great saving of time and friction both to himself and others—the processes of Lyttleton's mind were not quick. He hung back from self-committal, and was far too prone not only to hesitation, but to going back on his own words and thoughts and discovering that he did not agree with them. Caution, in short, was a predominant quality, combined with an introspective turn; and it occasioned a slowness in his movements and exterior characteristics which was useful as modifying a tendency to be direct in manner even to brusqueness.

His conversation with Honora in the rectory had precipitated an event for which he had long been preparing. After that event he had not forgotten her, but had kept himself acquainted with her main movements, and unconsciously treasured every bit of news about her. Still, his mind had hardly as yet travelled beyond surmise, those uncomplimentary words about her in the ear of his friend marking, perhaps, its advance—as Sheridan had interpreted it—towards the stage of debate. For Lyttleton's anxiety and agitation had certainly at present no reference to a doubt concerning the state of Honora's mind towards himself—his heart history had so far not nearly reached such a phase—it was caused by a doubt about his own. In his opinion the finding of any heart-friend is its own reward without the superaddition of crowning happiness, and it was quite within the quality

of his hesitating character to plunge at last, either in love or friendship, with a generous rashness, and to hold to his choice with a self-respecting constancy regardless of return. The heart once decided, the mind made up, neither man nor woman, he thought, whatever the outcome, can fail to draw up precious rewards from this deliberate leap into human experience.

"The first great thing is to discriminate," said he; "the second is a liberal venture."

The banging of a door in some nether region of the house and reverberating through all the sleeping stories recalled him to his position—to the guttering candle, the extinguished fire and lamps, and the common custom of going to bed. He started and walked forward mechanically. The change of posture was accompanied by a determination to call on Honora and see for himself to what phases of character an altered experience had brought her. As he slowly undressed he asked himself whether he had behaved altogether squarely by her in concealing his own gradual change of view; finally, he came to the unusual resolve of making a full confession. It brought him into a great heat to think of it, for the unburdening of the mind was a difficult thing to this reticent man, particularly when he suspected that his confidence would be received without sympathy. Still, when he had once come to a conclusion, with him it was final.

"Besides," he argued, "I am already found out."

Leslie called at the High School, after particular enquiries from Lucilla as to when the Head-mistress was likely to be in and at liberty. He was shown upstairs

to her private room, and the door being opened, he caught a glimpse of a writing-table strewn with books and papers, and the figure of Honora—familiar and yet unfamiliar—bending over it with rather dishevelled hair. He had an impression of a good deal that was tasteful and womanly in the room, and of a green plant or two throwing a cool shadow. Honora turned at the opening of the door. Mr. Lyttleton's name was announced.

"Oh!" cried she, springing to her feet and standing quite still to stare at him with burning cheeks and a face full of memories.

Leslie advanced into the room, and immediately and unconsciously, and in a very pretty feminine manner, she put up both hands to smooth her ruffled hair. Leslie's eyes smiling and softened followed the movement of the hands.

"How do you do, Mr. Lyttleton?" said Honora, recovering herself suddenly and taking a step towards him. "Please sit down."

Her eyes shone a little. Leslie seated himself, and she took a chair opposite. After her multifarious experiences in London, she remarked the rough coat and wide boots less, and the kindness of a friend's face more.

"It is a long time since we met," said Leslie.

"Is it?" said Honora.

"Unless you include the other night, of course," he returned, hastily. "You were at the lecture."

"So were you," retorted Honora, blushing; "*I* came in ignorance, with a friend."

Leslie perceived that they were already in antagonistic attitudes and launched upon a conversation that seemed

likely to prove a fencing match. But he was not ill-pleased. It had a flavour of intimacy, but it was inviting rather than dangerous. He was bent upon discovery and also upon that more serious experiment of confession; and he wished to avoid all emotion. A surprising realization of her beauty and wholesomeness seemed to threaten him with difficulty on that point in the first moment.

"Well," said he, slowly and carefully; "to tell the truth, I am always there."

"That surprises me," returned Honora, as gravely as though he had owned to some wrong-doing.

"Oh! Why should you feel surprised at it?"

"Because I thought the lecture detestable, and the debate noisy and absurd. Though there were some clever speeches, of course."

"I'm afraid I must confess myself in agreement with the tendency of thought even in the worst speech," returned Leslie, doggedly.

"Is that so?"

"Yes; it is so."

Honora leaned forward in her chair to look at him more closely.

"Does this mean that you are a declared Socialist?"

"Yes," said Leslie; "it means that."

Honora turned her head away and stretched her hand towards a vase full of chrysanthemums and autumn leaves, touching and rearranging the blossoms with a preoccupied air. She wished to accentuate her detachment from any personal concern in Mr. Lyttleton's affairs, but her lips were closed in disapproval.

"Let me try and relate my experience," said Leslie.

"Certainly," said Honora, placidly.

Leslie would have given something for a warm and encouraging glance. He felt that he needed his confidence to be met, taken by the hand, and run with all the way. But he received nothing of the kind. He was conscious of a painful difficulty in beginning, and spoke, in effect, throughout to a slightly flushed cheek, a handsome coil of hair, and fingers glancing through the flowers.

He told her of the half-unconscious changes that had been initiated within himself even while at the University, and of those private studies which had resulted in a silent, though profound revolt against the official economics taught there. Something of this revolt, he said, had lain at the bottom of his refusal of a fellowship, and of his determination to find independent employment in London. He informed her that he had set himself to seek information concerning the new school of Economists rising just then into notice and influence within the metropolis. This new school struck him as a necessary growth thrown off from the soil of the city. He saw it as an indigenous product of thought from the mingled constituents that make up London—from the depths and heights of life, the immense scope and variety of experience, the jostling within its circuit of every gradation between the extremes of cultivated existence and of dolorous disease.

"It could scarcely surprise me," said he, "to find how many young and audacious thinkers had thrown their ability and vigour into this line of thought; neither

could I wonder at the originality with which they touched their subjects. Fresh as I was from Cambridge, it came to me indeed as an unloosing of bonds. How could their thought be anything but fresh and true when it fed continually on the changing aspects of the real life that lay close to their ordinary everyday existence? I felt, inevitably it must succeed, because it had *life* in it; it was a genuine utterance to meet a genuine need. I saw from the very beginning that they were winning and must win their way. One day," he continued, "I heard for the first time a lecture from Paul Sheridan, our friend of the other evening. In him I saw, indeed, a son of the city's soil. And what more widely human can we find than a mind that has within it so much of the essence of a great city? His faith in the redemptability of his fellows, his determination to compass it if it might be, to give up his life to working to that end—not philanthropically, not in any benevolent fuss, but out of the force and directness of his thought and character—all this, together with the heart of truth in his arguments as to workable methods, won my conscience and established an influence over my actions. I sought and made his acquaintance. I suppose that from this particular lecture onwards my course was shaped towards one day throwing in my lot with him and his colleagues. But, Honora, it was your telling me your father's story that finally and irrevocably clenched my resolve."

This was the moment for the scales to fall from Honora's eyes. She re-read the interview in the rectory garden at a glance. When she realized how futile

her appeal had been, how ludicrously mistaken, she experienced a sharp stab of pity for her by-gone self. After one vivid blush she became paler.

"Is this altogether kind?" she murmured.

"I was not, perhaps, quite square with you in the past. I am trying now to make amends," said Leslie.

"Thank you," said Honora coldly. It was her bit of revenge to put aside the interesting topic of her own feeling as irrelevant. "Now, tell me," she continued, "is this, on your part, irrevocable?"

"Yes," he replied—"irrevocable."

Then she withdrew her hand from the flowers, turned her head, and looked him in the face with a full and deliberate scrutiny. This, she reflected, was the second man who within the year had confided to her ear a recital of his experience. What had taken them that they danced after will-o'-the-wisps in this fashion? On another count she was perplexed. When one has blackballed an opinion with one's own discredit, it is not an uncommon error to suppose that one's friends will show unanimity, or at least a delicate reserve, in owning up to it—that they at any rate will have the civility to hedge and equivocate. No hint of the kind was in Leslie's manner. Just now, indeed, as her scrutiny continued, he responded by an open-eyed smile.

"Am I forgiven?" said he.

"Oh, yes," she returned. "But you know—all that you have been telling me sounds rather vague, and I was utterly unprepared for such a disclosure."

"You were surprised, then, to see me at the lecture?"

"Indeed, I was surprised. Not only so—it was a

shock! Dear me! The whole thing struck me as an absurd and noisy scene. And to see you there—*you!* Sitting and ringing that little bell!"

Her tone changed suddenly from icy placidity to warmth.

"Well, yes! I do sit there sometimes and ring that little bell—when it is useful. But what did you think of the lecture?"

"I think that it is easy to be effective when the matter is inflammatory," said she. "As to the lecturer, I considered him detestable; he made me furious. Lucilla introduced us afterwards."

"Why! what is that?"

"His manners, to be sure."

"I always thought Sheridan particularly courteous!"

"Oh, dear me! Nobody likes to be made of no account."

"I am sorry if he offended you. Had you said anything?"

"Yes—which he immediately proved to be foolish."

Leslie laughed.

"You ought not to complain of that. Why should you object if he put you right?"

Honora sniffed.

Leslie pulled his moustache, while his eyes laughed above it.

"How about the Greek myths?" said he, to change the subject.

"Gone, with a good deal of other absurdity," said Honora, valorously; "lost and mislaid in this work-a-day world."

At this moment Lyttleton fancied that he suddenly saw round the baffling corner of her nature, and his heart bounded pleasantly.

"Your present position suits you, then?" he asked, eager for further discovery.

"Very much so indeed. Let me tell you that I like the independence of it."

She settled herself in her chair and turned her head in a self-possessed manner. She wished him to know that she could do without him quite well and should never appeal to him again. No! *That* opportunity was dropped irrevocably into the region of the lost—gone for him forever.

"Never mind me," she added, as one who can afford to belittle herself; "go on about this Socialism of yours."

Leslie returned to the subject nervously. This independent woman was a different creature from the girl who had tried to coax him into helping her to achieve mere notoriety. He found her much more powerful and impressive and admired her more. Let anyone exchange affectation for reality for ever so short a time and it will be found instantaneously effective.

"What more have I to say?" he replied. "Really, Honora, I have made a thoroughly clean breast of it this time."

"But I want to know all sorts of things—things that grow round about it. I'm sure your *motives* are all right, of course. But I'm nothing if not practical, and I want to know to what it all tends?"

"Oh! I don't know that I can prophesy."

"Well, just tell me this. Was that gathering last night a fair sample of a Socialist audience?"

"I think so—yes. Sometimes you may get a more turbulent assembly, of course."

"Dear me! Does it strike you that there was any infusion of conceit?"

"Probably. Why not? It generally sounds conceited when people very firmly say what they know they want and what they are determined to get."

She smiled musingly.

"People are so accustomed to hearing others hedge and defer to authority," he added.

She had her hands now on either arm of the chair and was moving her palms slowly over the smooth surface. Her head leaned back; she was looking at him under her eyelids.

"You talk so differently from what you used to do," said she, in a low, rich voice.

"Do I? Perhaps I am changed. I think you too changed, Honora."

"You know," she continued, "I used to think there were such ambitions open to you."

"Did you, indeed?" Leslie shook his head with rather sad-eyed firmness.

"Of course there may be something more in this Socialism than appears. If the Socialists, for instance, became a great political party?"

Leslie laughed.

"We are a mere handful," said he.

"A handful of determined men can move the world."

"That is so at times," he said. "Honora! are you

hankering after the theatrical effect of a violent revolution?"

"Only if successful!" she replied, promptly.

"What an extremely feminine idea this is!" said Leslie, musingly, and crushing his soft hat in his hands.

"The revolution? or the success?"

"The violent revolution."

"I assure you at once I do not want anything of the kind. But I do like things to be practical and successful. I can see no use at all in vague ideas."

"Do you not? I think they form the ground for action in the next generation."

"I'm afraid I hardly care to be general servant to posterity."

"You want to rule in this?" said Leslie, smiling.

"Of course I do. And you? *You* might be a great leader, I suppose, since you *have* chosen this path?"

"I? Nothing of the sort, I assure you, Honora; there never was a more mistaken idea."

"Then I give it up! This is indeed a visionary vision. I don't understand in the least what you are driving at, or why you have adopted it. I consider it all highly unsatisfactory, Leslie."

Lyttleton sat silent, smiling rather absently. He was noting that she had called him by his Christian name; but the tones of her voice seemed rather to indicate an assumption of equality than an access of tenderness.

"I suppose," she continued, "I shall learn more about London in time. This queer, queer London! I believe it to be full of cranks. As for myself—frankly, I am absorbed in my work. Still, I will get Lucilla to take

me about with her and show me things. Lucilla belongs to London as the *gamins* belong to Paris. I suspect that she is a crank too. But I love Lucilla."

She threw her head back and laughed. The laugh is the point of danger. But Honora looked a very comely creature laughing thus musically and gently, with flashing white teeth between her lips. Leslie was a little sore at the cheerful indifference in which his solemn confidence had been received, but her presence, her atmosphere, cheated him at last even out of that sensation. There was, he felt sure, no quarrel between them now; and that at least was a satisfaction.

"So you do like your work? You *are* content?" he said, as he rose, his grasp tightening nervously on his hat.

"I like it, and I am content. Oh, how very, very angry I was with you! But, after all, you were right. How furious one is with the person who is right while one is wrong! But it is all forgiven now. I have found my fitting place. The work as far as I myself go is precisely what suits me."

The voice was brisk and decided; laughter was still in her eyes. He smiled as he took her hand and murmured that he would see her again. But once outside, he became grave, and asked himself whether he had made the least progress in his journey of discovery.

When he had gone she gave a little skip in the air and clapped her hands above her head. She looked all joyous life and girlish beauty; the ripples of her laughter seemed to run over her figure. On the whole, she was very much satisfied with herself and with the interview. After so many humble dishes, it had been a

tasty thing. Moreover, she had learnt new and interesting facts about herself. The meeting with Leslie revealed the advantage she had gained through her firm step into independence.

"Why, of course!" she cried; "I belong to myself now exactly as he belongs to himself! There is not *that* to choose between us!" Here she snapped two pairs of white fingers over her head, her uplifted face laughing between. "I need not ask him, nor father, nor anyone. I am what I am and can stand to it!"

CHAPTER XI.

HONORA's friendship with Lucilla prospered. On her side it was very tender, stronger and deeper than any emotion she had as yet experienced. While submitting herself in a quite extraordinary way to the spiritual and intellectual guidance of her friend, her own superior physical strength and her strong common sense caused her to assume a protective attitude towards her. She took to watching over Lucilla. And as the weeks went on she detected a growing pathos in the eyes of the latter—a shade of trouble on the brow. Whereupon her thought turned to the portrait she had seen on the wall of her friend's sitting-room, and she laid up a second grudge against Mr. Sheridan. In effect, however, she scarcely gauged the situation; nowadays the original theme between the sexes is played with variations.

One evening, not so long after the lecture, Lucilla sat

solitary in her workman's flat expecting Sheridan's visit. Sheridan had thought of her pale little face with a good deal of kindness ever since the evening of his lecture. He had spoken the simple truth when he told Lyttleton he had no clue to her depression or her change; and now he determined to find time in his growingly busy life to try and put things right if he should find that anything had gone wrong. That was how it came about that Lucilla was expecting him. She had thought of his visit all day, and now listened for his steps with ears in which the silence throbbed, sitting with hands clasped round her knees, her head a little bent, thinking —dreaming.

Lucilla had the gift—a very rare one—of tasting the imaginative in everything. Existence was something that she realized—not as Sheridan realized it, with a perfect genius for seizing the practical turn of events, but on the less tangible, less visible side. It was not only thus with her own life, but with all existence; for her a wonder rested on the day. It was never a commonplace thing with her to look into the face of another, to hear the voice of another, to receive even moderate confidences. She was intensely responsive to and conscious of that principle of continuity and oneness that may be philosophically observed and argued about, but which is rarely an ever-present reality to the mind. Most people lose this particular flavour of things in preoccupation with details. Possessing the exceptional power, Lucilla was not often dull and lonely, though occasionally, through over-capacity in sympathy, a little melancholic, and again suffering sharply through her ten-

dency to throw her own baffling dream over those to whom her affection clung. She was dreaming now, and mingling the greatness of her cosmical idea with the personality of the practical man of affairs who was at the moment mounting the steps to her flat. When his knock came, she went to open the door with a tumultuous heart and a subdued face.

It might almost have seemed that Sheridan on entering should have caught some departing rustle of the wings of Lucilla's thoughts; but he had come to her straight from the busy work-a-day world, and the noise of it was still in his ears. All he noticed was the girl's familiar form, the light of the room behind her dark head, and the beginning of a dry smile on her lips. As he entered, he wore the wistfully friendly smile with which it was natural to him to try and amend for any hurt which he suspected but could not understand. From his lips, however, only commonplaces fell. No one could be more open than he when he liked, but he had his reticent side and would feel his way with a difficult subject. Lucilla occasionally thought that they took refuge in commonplaces from something of import that lurked on the edges of either mind.

"I have brought you the proof of the last leaflet," said he; "I thought you might like to see it."

"Thank you," returned she, a little crestfallen, while he searched in his pockets.

"It represents a good deal of hard work," he remarked, as he handed it to her.

"Ah, yes! I am sure of that if you have had to do it. People will say it is a 'dream.'"

"Dream or no dream, within six months they will have adopted it as practical politics."

Lucilla was fingering the pamphlet absently.

"That's how we get on!" said she, permitting the dry smile to escape her.

"Of course. By sheer iteration. You repeat and repeat a thing until it sticks, and then people imagine they've said it themselves all along."

"And forget the source of the idea!" said Lucilla, regretfully.

"Oh, that doesn't matter," he returned, with his friendly smile.

But Lucilla was turning the pages and glancing between them with a face which Sheridan interpreted as one of distaste.

"I'm afraid it's rather dull," said he, apologetically.

"Paul," said the girl, shyly, the colour mounting to her cheeks with the effort of the words, "I wish you'd read something of mine."

Her glance avoided his and her heart was beating. The moment the words were out she wished them unspoken.

"Of *yours*, Lucilla?" cried Sheridan, leaning forward with his kindest smile; "have *you* been writing?"

"Oh, no! I don't mean that. I haven't time even to think of such a thing, you know," she returned, withdrawing her hand nervously from his pamphlet.

"What is it, then?" he asked, rather coldly.

"Well, *this*."

She pushed forward a rival pamphlet. Sheridan took it up and dropped it again with a sour look. "Achille

d'Auverney" was the name written on the cover. He handed it back to her side of the table, turned his head from her so that only the profile was visible, and drummed on the table with his fingers.

"I don't think this sort of thing is any use," said he, very gently and very firmly.

"You won't read it?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because it's waste of time."

"Paul——"

"Yes?"

"May I read you a little?"

"Certainly. If you wish it."

She took up the paper with shaking hands. Her throat was dry, she moistened her lips. Then she began:

"'It must be war to the knife, neither concession nor compromise is possible. Set yourself against everything established, because everything that is established is a lie. The only truth possible to you is the attitude of the destroyer. On no excuse will you become the servant of the system, nor clothe yourself with tyrannical power under the fiction that you are representing another; all offices, all elections, are a lie. If you climb, you do so by treading on the necks of your fellows—you make a ladder of souls. In all things you must be the equal of others. Property you must repudiate. Do the Bourgeoisie respect it who thieve from *you?* Personal appropriation *is not.* All things are common to all men. Your right is everywhere. All things *are*

yours. In the heart of a sphere of lies grows up this truth—irresistible, ominous. And soon it will burst it asunder.' "

She broke off suddenly. Sheridan sat immovable, except that he had courteously left off drumming on the table.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Lucilla.

"Well?" asked Sheridan, without turning his head.

"I can't read. Something cold takes hold of my throat when I try to. I think it is because of you."

"I'm sure I'm very sorry. I was listening. What more can I do?"

"But I *feel* you don't like it."

"Then, Lucilla, *why* do you try and read it to me?"

The girl sighed rather fiercely.

"I'm reading it because *I* like it. You've no idea," said she, in a low, struggling voice, "how difficult it is—how very difficult it is for me to differ from you."

Sheridan turned his face round suddenly; it was full of a very cordial and helpful friendliness.

"I am really sorry that you like this stuff," said he.

"Oh! it isn't 'stuff.' You are prejudiced against Monsieur d'Auverney."

"Not a bit of it. And perhaps I should not have said I am sorry you like it, so much as that I am sorry you attach importance to it. To me it reads like a string of irrelevancies."

"Does it?"

"Certainly. I can detect nothing practical in it at all."

"I think d'Auverney meant it to be an ideal principle —a guide."

"Very well, then. That makes me suspect *him*. A man who speaks of being in all things equal with others, and that everything that is established is a lie, is talking nonsense and probably knows it."

"But the rest?"

"It is all mere clap-trap. If her Majesty sent for d'Auverney to-morrow in order to bestow office upon him with a view to his bringing in a bill for the Nationalization of the Land, would he call that treading on the necks of his fellows? and do you suppose he would refuse?"

"I firmly believe he would!" cried Lucilla, quite loud and with a spark in her eye.

"*Then* he's neglecting his duty!"

Lucilla laughed in spite of herself. Sheridan echoed it. The laugh eased the growing tension between them. Sheridan leaned over the table with his friendliest smile.

"You tell me it is difficult for you to differ from me?"

"Ah, yes!"

"Why should you try to do so, then? It argues that you don't really differ. If you did, it would be easy."

Lucilla's lips parted and closed again. A sigh escaped her instead of the reply for which he waited.

"*I* don't care for the Bourgeoisie," he continued; "a Socialist is, in effect, of no class. But I would suggest to you that it is just as criminal to be too much before the time and to try and force action upon it for which it is not ready, as it is to be behindhand and to attempt to retard reform."

"Besides," he added—and now he was tugging at his moustache—"it is absurd. Let d'Auverney try to ad-

minister the affairs of the smallest office and realize the complexity of the interests involved before he clamours for a clean erasure."

Lucilla tossed d'Auverney's pamphlet—which was entitled *Down with the Bourgeoisie!*—aside.

"Paul!" said she, springing up suddenly with quite a changed air, "I have been trying to put together a little notice of the coming lectures in the local papers, and I can't do it a bit. My head aches after correcting all my school-work and I feel almost imbecile."

"Hand it over to me," said Sheridan, beaming kindly; "can't I put it together for you? I've got time."

He glanced at his watch.

"Now? How good you are! Here is some paper and the beginning I made."

She brought it to him, and as he drew up to the table, stood leaning over his shoulder and pointing things out to him with her fine little finger.

"You see I meant this and that," she said, "and it wouldn't come into shape."

"All right," said he; "I see. I shall bring it out straight presently."

Lucilla left his side. She pushed a low stool to the hearth and sat down on it, leaning her head on her hand. The light from the lamp fell on his notable forehead and strong face. Trifling though the task was, he accepted it with all his heart, and was soon absorbed and writing away rapidly, pushing the pages aside as they were done, stopping now and then to make an erasure and to touch his moustache thoughtfully, as though it helped his ideas, but going on again imme-

diately. Now and then he sighed. Lucilla, her cheek burning under her hand, watched him all the time he was at work, dreaming meanwhile dreams that were utterly alien from him. To the surface observer the thoughts of these two comrades of the Revolution were but two sides of the same thing; in reality, there was between them the possibility of opposition more irreconcilable than between them and their common foe.

"There!" said Sheridan, tossing aside the last sheet and smiling to find the large-eyed gaze upon him; "there's a handsome advertisement if you want one!"

"Do you know," said she, "your face keeps reminding me of something."

"And what is that?" said he.

"Something in nature. You make nothing of nature —never see it, I believe. Yet your face reminds me of a mountain I once saw. It was one of a range of hills that lay opposite the windows of a house where I was staying. The sun set over them. This hill was shaped differently from the rest. It had the aspect of the face of a man lying upwards to the sky, and it changed like a face does. That was, I suppose, just atmospheric effect—the passing of cloud and sunshine. But it gave me the feeling of a vast silent communicativeness."

"Lucilla," said Sheridan, gently, "I'm afraid I don't understand all this poetry. The only poetry I can see is that which one puts into every-day work and life."

"But you'll let me tell you?"

"Yes. Oh, please do go on."

His face cleared and softened. He had given up some of his precious time to help this strange little creature

in her incomprehensible difficulties, and he was not going to be balked of his intention.

"There were two ideas that I always associated with the hill. The features were curiously like yours——"

"Like mine!"

"And I could never look at it without the idea of democracy springing unbidden to my mind."

"Indeed? I think I can understand that."

"But I wanted to say this"—the girl's voice shook—"in the face of the mountain was something that is lacking in yours."

"Well, Lucilla?"

It was impossible for him to keep a note of dryness from his tone.

"Oh, nothing after all! You lack that single quality. I know it, and it vexes me."

Sheridan moved rather uneasily in his chair and tugged at his moustache in desperation. The girl's tone had been so gentle and pleading he could not but be touched by it, and he felt that her sensitiveness had shrunk from something in his own. He turned his face towards her again, and that with his inimitably sweet smile.

"If you are going to bring me to book for failing to carry out a chance resemblance to a mountain in every particular, I am sure I shall not know how to answer."

"But, Paul! I found the difference typical!"

The girl's voice was sharp with pain.

"All right! Where am I in fault?"

The tone was not in the least nettled; it was interested and kind. If Lucilla could widen his sphere of self-knowledge, she was by so much more his friend. There

was no one who suffered less from diseased vanity than Sheridan.

"Is it faith that you want?" said she.

"I shouldn't have said so," he returned.

"Then why do you rely so much on opportunity? Why don't you make a way yourself?"

"I should have thought that was the chief sign of my faith. My opportunism is a lively symbol of it. What I do is to trust, and to *follow on:* to dream that my dream lies within my opportunities, and to seize them."

"But it makes you lack the great quality which makes a great leader," she persisted.

He reflected on the words with a shade of amusement in his eyes, detecting an image of himself in her mind to which his consciousness did not altogether correspond.

"I begin to suspect that the missing quality is the sublime!" said he, chuckling. "Whoever said I was to be a great leader?"

She looked at him reproachfully.

"Pray, who has decided that I am to be great? I am," he continued, with that genuineness whose infusion into his nature made his power more powerful, "merely a man of detail and resource."

"You can do what you like," she returned, in a low, hurried voice. "A man like you! A man like you!"

"No; I can't do what I like," said he, his face assuming an aspect of deep perplexity.

"That is your want of faith!" said she.

She was gazing at him with glowing eyes, but the eyes of her mind were fixed on something beyond. Lucilla's was the naked, daring dream of sheer revolution. She

was ever in suspense for the tremendous word which would transfigure life and place that revolutionary notion of hers within measurable distance. She oscillated between these moods of suppressed expectation and the every-day depression on which she expended her dry smiles and sarcasms. If Paul would only utter that word, would give that signal—and from him she would have it come and not from another—there was nothing she would not do, no rash leap in the dark she would not have taken under his direction. But would he utter it?

In knowledge of the world Lucilla was a mere dreaming baby, a child with a fairy-tale; and she really believed that Sheridan had this in his power.

"I have it in my heart," thought she, "but I have no voice. He must be the Voice. It must come from him."

Meanwhile, Paul, uneasily suspecting an over-estimation of his power, sought a reply which should be at once true and kind.

"I see you are labouring under some mistake concerning me," came his composed tones in between her thinking. "But I am not under an error as to myself. I know what sort of a mind I have."

Expectation had not yet gone underground; she waited for more. The silence began to have a particular intensity. Turning his head he caught the glow in her eyes and smiled.

"I believe you want to die heroically in Trafalgar Square!" said he, suddenly inspired. "Now, that marks the difference between us. I am simply engrossed in working out that matter of the gas and water."

He spoke jokingly, but was startled to see the sudden blanching of her face.

"Oh," said she in her driest voice, "you'll do very well!"

He leaned towards her enquiringly.

"Oh," she added, lowering her eyes and fighting with a rising sob, "you will—*succeed* all right."

"Shall I?" said he, very gently; "of course I should be glad of that."

But so commonplace a thing as success was not only no part of Lucilla's ideal, it was not permitted to it. Paul stepped down from his pedestal when he said he should be glad.

"Why, yes," said she; "you'll—*get on.*"

"I can't help wishing for recognition, of course," said he, looking at her in grave surprise, "but only if it is part of a larger success. I assure you of that, Lucilla."

"Oh, yes!" said she, putting her hand up to her throat.

"I don't think I am quite following you," said he, with rather pathetic friendliness of manner.

"Perhaps not. Oh! I daresay there is nothing to follow."

"You'll read the pamphlet, won't you?" said he, kindly. "Look here! If you've got all these copy-books to correct I might leave you the proof a day longer. I want your opinion on it, you know."

He pointed to the heap of school work as he spoke. Her heart fluttered in her breast. His kindness chained and subdued that larger passion which it harboured, that cosmical emotion. Once she had connected it with his personality alone; the habit of reference to him was

still strong, but change and rebellion were already at work. If she had spoken, the words would have run into an entreaty for a more exacting claim upon her allegiance.

"Don't give me kindness," she would have said; "that way you trouble me. Say something rousing; call me to do something."

But Sheridan made no such claim, had no such idea. These moods of Lucilla had indeed an annoying side to the strong man of plain affairs, but she was his friend and comrade, and he had a great, kind patience. Indeed, his gentleness deepened as her face blanched more and more. He would have given much to assuage the hurt which he perceived without comprehending.

"I promised to call round on Lyttleton. He is hard at work just now on a sketch of a Factory Act," said he, making a new effort to interest her.

"Yes? I hate a Factory Act," returned Lucilla, who yearned to hear that the planet was in a blaze.

"Do you? I am sorry for that, because I think it important. Well, good-bye. I suppose I must go. I speak, by the way, from Platform 5 on Sunday in the Park."

"I like these great assemblies of the people," said she, firing up; "when I touch them I touch reality. I am safe with them; I have my true place among them. I am afraid neither of their vice, their roughness, nor their disease."

"I don't believe you are, Lucilla," said he, cordially. "But I must be off to my work." He took her hand, holding it warmly. "I wish I could have helped you

more. I daresay I've said the wrong thing. Do forgive me. Well! I've no doubt I shall see you in the Park."

He looked at her with kind consideration; he met a strange, solemn gaze that startled him, and dropping her hand he withdrew.

CHAPTER XII.

SHERIDAN descended the steps more slowly than was his wont. He was baffled, pained; he knew that he had failed, and he could not understand the reason of his failure.

In the sitting-room Lucilla stood where he had left her, lost in thought—her hands folded, her head bent. She was not listening to, and therefore did not hear, the slowly-descending steps echoing on the stone staircase; but this was not because Paul had dropped out of her mind the moment he had withdrawn from her sight, but because he was so intimate a part of the mental struggle in which he had left her, that she was unable to occupy herself in the exterior matters connected with him. She was no mere girl in love to run to catch a departing glimpse of the person of a lover; that was not the relation between the two: their tie was the tie of comradeship. Preference there always must be—whether between man and man or man and woman—in the "love of comrades" as in other affections, the heart of the one feeling after that other who can best respond to its individual quality.

Such preferences enhance the common joy in the union effected through a simultaneous surrender to a distinguishing thought—a thought which singles out a few and impels them together, and apart from others, in a great coincidence of aim and idea.

But it is not the private preference, it is the coincidence of aim which gives the touch of tragical earnestness to the tie—the idea in common lifting the personal relation to the level of a great allegiance.

Paul walking down the stairs towards the street carried with his personality an inseparable impress of the communistic dream as it existed in Lucilla's mind. But the socialistic idea stood to her like a lonely forest tree, vast, unencumbered, stark, and without the chance of comparison with kindred or lesser growths. Now Paul, as a man of the world, threaded every day an intricate way amidst a crowding multitude of competing ideas, and measured his own notion with them.

For a man thus plunged in the tides of life about him it was almost impossible to realize the single-eyed preoccupation with an absolute idea which a great-hearted girl in her restricted life might cherish. On her side it was unlikely that she should understand the apparent modification of his attitude in face of a complex Reality with which she never came in touch. Her crying need was to keep the beautiful idea intact, to divide it with none, to compromise in no particular. Its very extravagances were precious to her. Now, Paul met these dryly. He did not sneer; he simply laid them aside as useless to the work in hand. This was mere evidence of his strength and sagacity, of his accurate measure of the

possible; yet Lucilla was chafed by it and disappointed. In reality he was a no less far-reaching dreamer than she was; but he bore his dreams, and not they him; he built warily about them and netted them in the practical.

The one tremendous test of character is to harbour a dream sanely, and not to be driven by that disquieting and inimitable presence beyond our poor necessary limits out to the unguided impulses beyond. Unfortunately, rashness and prominent self-sacrifice were to Lucilla necessary constituents of virtue, and the growing success of Paul's method and that of his friends in procuring a wide recognition of Socialism was slowly awakening discontent in her heart and undermining its trust and allegiance. Was there not elsewhere to be found a more complete correspondence between the inner ideal and the outward form?

Standing motionless the better to fix her mind on its torture of irresolution, this was the question she debated, her heart in its furious beating keeping pace with the oscillation of her thought between impulse and inaction. It was as though Sheridan, who by this time was turning out of the building into the street, was carrying away with him and further and further from her her best safety and highest self-possession. Presently he reached the end of the street and turned into another which led in the direction of Lyttleton's chambers. At that moment, remembering his errand, he shook himself together, dropped Lucilla and her moods out of his mind, and stepped briskly forward. Had his engrossment with her, his regret and commiseration, acted as a mesmeric or telepathic power? For in the same instant the girl,

starting from her absorption with a sigh, ran to her bedroom, and came back with a hat and cloak in her hand, which she flung about her person in a great despatch and hurry, as though she feared the impulse to action might die out unfulfilled. Then she ran to the door. Her fingers were upon the handle, when she hesitated again. An extreme pallor marked her face; her eyes wandered over the homely little chamber, the glances touching familiar things quickly and as quickly passing away from them; finally they were arrested by Sheridan's portrait. She stared at it fixedly; some vague presentiment, a warning, a silent reproach, went out from it. She withdrew her hand from the door, her fingers sought the clasp of her cloak as though to unfasten it. Would that some infallible guide were with us to direct even our fine impulses in their oscillations between action and refraining, and their choice between the double currency of silence and of speech! How much more those of our rasher and less honourable hours! The next moment the door closed behind her, and she was running in wilful haste down the stairs.

The direction in which Lucilla turned was opposite to the one Sheridan had taken, and finally she hailed an omnibus marked Westminster. Quarter of an hour later she was walking under the shadow of the Abbey, and then towards the Bridge. Her steps were swift; she hurried along without observing much, and yet the feeling of the place and of the night was with her. So that on reaching the Bridge she paused—as she was to pause many and many a night hereafter—and, laying her hand on the stonework, looked towards the east. Her

eyes were full of a great and passionate yearning; she scarcely saw the lights or the gleam of the water or the shaping of the buildings into fantastic shadows by the darkness. She saw only her own dream. Across the dream hurried processions of miserable ones—of outcasts to whom earth and life had been cruel, of shreds and remnants of humanity who did not taste of joy—hunger and cold, disease, crime itself were there. All that the eye of her mind beheld she unshrinkingly embraced without offence, without hesitation. Her single desire was to find that way by which consecration of her life to their help might be most complete, most entire.

Her pause was scarcely more than momentary. She went quickly on and passed into a shabby street, where presently she reached the house she looked for. By the time her hand was raised to the knocker nothing of her late turmoil remained save the sad sense of being alone and without the faces of her comrades about her. The shadow of evil presentiment—that future, running with its ominous warning finger into the hour of the present had withdrawn. The mere fact of decided action had resulted in a sense of assurance, even of a pleasurable appreciation of the thrill of adventurous existence.

In answer to her knock, the door opened almost immediately, and a shabby man of extremely foreign appearance, smoking a cigarette, thrust his head forward; he gave a start of astonishment when he saw the slight figure standing outside.

This obvious surprise was for the moment a little dismaying to Lucilla, who remained speechless upon the

threshold, while the foreigner peered at her curiously and suspiciously. An impulse from the orderly habit deeply rooted in her girl's life tugged, as it were, at the very skirt of her dress. She had almost turned to flee as suddenly as she had come. Unfortunately, she stood her ground.

"Is Monsieur d'Auverney here?" faltered she.

"Ah! You are one comrade!"

And without pausing to hear her reply he went to the bottom of the stairs and called the name of the Frenchman. The next moment d'Auverney, who had advanced from the second story, was running down towards her with outstretched hand and a vehement welcome on his lips.

"Yes! I am come," gasped the girl, as he stooped forwards to look enquiringly into her wide-open eyes; "I am come after all. Only to see, though. After all—after all! I am *not* satisfied!"

"Come upstairs," was d'Auverney's reply, "and let me introduce you to the comrades."

Meanwhile, Sheridan was in Lyttleton's rooms. The two friends were seated at a table piled with papers, Blue Books, Law Books, and books of reference of various kinds. The work in hand was that of drafting for Parliament a new Factory Act. The idea was Sheridan's, the scope, the measures of the Bill were his, but many of the clauses and a good deal of the wording were Lyttleton's. This joint sort of labour was common to Sheridan and his friends, who, throwing their time and effort into the common stock, lost the identity of any particular literary hand or personal suggestion in excel-

lent collective results. On the present occasion neither Sheridan nor Lyttleton ever expected to have their names mentioned in connection with the work they had in hand.

Sheridan, to begin with, had found a sympathetic member of Parliament who had fallen in with the projected scheme, and had willingly consented to put his name on the back of the Bill when it was ready, and to introduce it to the House on as favourable an opportunity as the Government would allow. The member—Mr. Martin Inchbald, of Wellshire—offered suggestions and would probably make alterations, but his stipulation was that he should be spared the sacrifice of time necessary to the shaping of such an act into proper legislative form. In every other way he was in thorough agreement with the pair and a willing co-operator. Sheridan's next care had been to catch the ears of a few members whose sympathies leaned with his desires, but who were either lukewarm in the matter, or doubtful as to the practicality of the projected legislation. Many and long had been his conversations with these hesitating souls; his handling of their respective personalities had been an inspiration of deftness, and his arguments far too adroit and ready to be easily parried by the breathless and often half-informed legislators, who eventually capitulated to his attacks. For at the back of the man's felicitous skill with his fellows was always that sense of genuine and lofty will, that fire-spot of enthusiasm which carried the day where lesser methods might have failed. The most onerous part, the sketch and elaboration of the Bill, had still to be accomplished, and this was the business before them.

Neither man had the least expectation of success in the passage of the whole Bill through a House in which a Conservative Government was in power, and neither of them was in the least dashed or injured in his energy by the certainty of its defeat. But they did cherish the hope that some of their clauses might be accepted as amendments to the Government Bill.

"There are now a handful of members—all more or less able speakers—who have pledged themselves to the measure," said Sheridan, his hand moving rapidly between paste-pot and scissors, "and that is a forward enough step for the present. Some of them, at least, are bound to hit upon the right arguments in the process of debate; at any rate, I've coached them assiduously. The great thing is to bring the idea of this particular line of reform before the House, and to get it talked about."

"By the way, I had a letter from Inchbald the other day. He thinks we do not make sufficiently clear what are the separate provinces of the Sanitary and Factory Inspectors," returned Lyttleton.

"We must mark that out a bit, then. I want to lean towards extending the Factory Inspectors' powers. And I thought I'd made that clear enough. Hand me the old Act, will you, and our first draft of this one?"

Sheridan at work upon this serious bit of state business was not a whit different in attitude or manner from what he had been in Lucilla's room. He wrote with the same rapidity and complete concentration, now and then saving time by the scissors and paste-pot expedient; the word seemed to leap to his thought, occasionally he rather testily rejected some suggestion of Lyttleton's

which he considered ill-advised, at others he accepted one in preference to his own with a lightening of his whole face to his companion's idea, and a short exclamation of "That's it!" Frequently he ruthlessly and unhesitatingly effaced phrases of his own or of Lyttleton's that did not commend themselves to his maturer judgment, with a quite impartial disregard of the vanity of either.

It was about a quarter before midnight that he suddenly threw down his pen and turned towards the clock; he stared at it with an absent and harassed glance, so that his friend suspended his own work also to look at him.

"Lyttleton," said he, still unconsciously staring at the hands, "there's one thing in addition to all the rest that's becoming more and more self-evident to me, and that is, that we've *got to fight the Anarchists.*"

"Very well. But what makes you think of it now?"

Lyttleton also dropped his pen and leaned back in his chair. Sheridan did not reply; he still gazed meditatively and absently at the clock with a peculiar falling away of the lines of his strong face into a sensitive and commiserating look—as though some idea had stirred his heart suddenly to the deepest feeling of pity.

"You know," pursued Lyttleton, seeing that his friend did not respond, "there is, in my opinion, a certain amount of truth in Anarchism."

"Just enough to make the lie more fatal."

"And what makes you feel to-night that we must fight it?"

"Merely a clearer apprehension than usual that it is

the shortest cut I know of to reaction. If you want to point me out the genuine enemy of practical Socialism show me an Anarchist."

Lyttleton pushed the papers aside and took out a cigarette and lit it. After a reflective puff or two he looked again towards his friend.

"It will never take much hold in England," said he. "Why are you alarmed? It's the sort of thing that lives by persecution. And you see we just let it alone."

Paul was still looking straight before him with that gentle, commiserating look.

A little before this hour the door of the house into which Lucilla had vanished reopened, and she issued from it in company with half a dozen men and a sprinkling of women. She turned quickly, and without even nodding good-night, in the direction of the Bridge. D'Auverney followed her, but she did not remark it.

It had been very great, very inspiring, this talk with the Anarchist comrades. Her spirit was full of soft "oh-ohs" of excitement, her cheeks burned, and her eyes gleamed like the reflections in the water upon which presently they were fixed.

Was it indeed possible that those stern barriers of time and circumstance and inertia, which daily throw back zeal and determination to the attitudes of vigilant waiters upon opportunity, could be broken down by the resolute action of a few staunch companions?

She leaned her arms and body upon the stone and abandoned herself to reflection; daring emotion thrilled every nerve as though with some intoxicating stimulant. To be in active conspiracy against society—not as Paul

was, living in it, adopting its methods and turning them against itself—but in very actuality to exist as its deadly foe! Such a conception came as an offer of emancipation to her conscience and her heart. Extreme and sudden steps have this joyous feel; we appear to be bounding into liberty and have no suspicion that bondage may lurk at the end. She panted with longing for some such instant release and self-realization—for a plain, straight way in which her feet might run without this harassing sense of doubt and groping. Paul had once laughed and said that the cry for assurance about our actions was like the cry for assurance of immortality. But if everyone, for instance, would but simultaneously *fling* themselves upon the right!

It was curious that at the moment an old phrase of Paul's ran inconsequently into her mind from some recess of memory.

"Too much is involved for us to *dare* to be hasty, Lucilla! It is our duty to examine and to test, to study and to vigilantly watch for and seize opportunity. That is the true attitude of right citizenship."

She almost heard the grave, musical voice and saw the kind eyes bent on her in the old familiar way; that sudden vivid presentation of her friend arrested her with the sense of something homely, comforting, and safe. And just then the hour of a quarter to midnight chimed from Big Ben. She started and raised herself from her leaning posture with a curious sense of sudden awakening. D'Auverney, seeing her move, advanced quietly.

"I was waiting until you were roused from your absorption, mademoiselle," said he.

Lucilla turned. The voice, polished and attuned, fretted her with a sense of incongruity. Looking up to him, the foreign, handsome face, with its large and luminous smile—its dark smile as from dark eyes and hair and skin—came to her with a startling sense of strangeness. Unconsciously she straightened herself and drew her cloak closer about her, and then withdrawing her eyes, fixed them on the darkness of the river across the Bridge, dotted with indistinct lights.

"Monsieur d'Auverney," said she, in a slow, soft voice, "you must not think too much of my having been here to-night. It has been very refreshing—a great uplift. But nothing is very clear to me just yet."

The foreigner's eyes rested on the fine little profile—on the face full of possibilities of truth and devotion—scarcely shadowed out from the surrounding darkness.

"Oh, no, mademoiselle," said he, gently, "I would rather you examined and proved yourself first. But it is a step——" he added.

"What is a step?"

"It is a step to have you here on this Bridge," he said, sharply, "under the shadow of those pretentious and accursed buildings, and debating whether you will continue to throw in your adhesion *there*"—and he pointed to the Houses of Parliament—"or with us and suffering humanity down yonder."

And he threw out his hand with a swift, expressive gesture towards the East. It was very well done, and it was obviously sincere; but it happened to be an error in tactics. Lucilla turned proudly aside, an indignant tear in her eye.

"You mistake me," she returned. "I am debating nothing of the kind. *We* don't belong *there* in Parliament at all. It is only—that I have not left the old comrades—*yet*."

And she took a step onwards. D'Auverney moved to her side quickly.

"Permit me to accompany you home," said he.

"No, thank you—*no!*" said she, very rapidly and firmly. "I would rather be alone. I am accustomed to find my way by myself."

A horror of his company seized her; she stepped forwards hastily. Indeed, her eyes were overflowing with tears; no great emotion brought them there; it was a sense of homelessness, a yearning for the faces of old friends. All the excitement and light and thrill died suddenly out of the evening and left her feeling as a child might do who under some terrible fairy enchantment wakens to find itself upon a new hearthstone, with a circle of new, strange faces in the place of the old brothers and house-mates.

For, after all, it is the affections that give acuteness to the great allegiance.

CHAPTER XIII.

PAUL SHERIDAN was undoubtedly a profoundly disagreeable person. Complacency had no chance with him, and complacency was, in consequence, furious.

Honora, for instance, found it extremely difficult to pardon him for his conversational method. Lyttleton

insisted upon bringing him to call, though Sheridan himself was alarmed and protesting; and afterwards a series of pleasant supper-parties were arranged with the object of introducing Honora to the Socialist circle.

Honora made two or three discoveries in the course of this experience:—in the first place, that the Socialist circle had a vivid and easy charm of its own which agreeably distinguished it from other society; in the second, that it obviously included some of the most advanced thinkers of London; indeed, it had quite an extinguishing effect upon her University recollections—that "*past*" whose intellectual brilliancy she had believed could scarcely be repeated; again, she discovered that the possession of an University education and a first-class in classics by no means necessarily made her a match for the members of it.

"Really, Lucilla," said she, some three months after Lyttleton's first call, "I feel that I am being put through a course of intellectual gymnastics. Now, *my* ideal of conversation has always been to have a distinguished man in a corner to myself—a man who will talk brilliantly but who will never forget to introduce a soothing compliment every two or three minutes. I like to be sure that I am not being ignored."

Lucilla's lip went up.

"That isn't Mr. Lyttleton's style, is it?" asked she.

"Not of late," said Honora, slowly; "it used to be something of that kind. As to Mr. Sheridan——"

"What of him?"

"Conversation with him resembles a game of skittles. *I* am the skittle, you understand. *He* is the ball."

Lucilla, comically smiling, thought she could follow Honora's meaning.

Indeed, Sheridan's conversation was apt to be dotted with figures; he would use them to meet vague clever-sounding generalities, introducing them side by side with quotations from the poets in a juxtaposition which struck Honora as strange and certainly not in the best classical style.

In truth, the food for his imagination lay in the commonest things; he required no more than the every-day affairs of an every-day earth to set his heart a-work on its lifelong labour of divination. The poetry he read out of a factory or a workshop was not a mere fanciful appreciation of the packed life beating in a multitude of individuals between four walls—the superior person detecting for verse-making purposes the picturesqueness of destiny working itself out in many closely adjacent lines.

No one ever had his nose less in the air than Sheridan.

It was that to his divining eye the commonest things told the deepest earth histories. The rhythm of his poetry had in it the fall of hammers, the hum of wheels, the ceaseless tramp of the workers' feet, the rattle of traffic, and the rush of steam. As the genius of the historian out of broken pottery and scattered shreds revives the palpitating life of the long-dead city, so he out of figures would extract the passionate realities and tragedies of present existence.

"Your truest poetry is found in statistics," he would say.

But if his poetry was not that of the superior person,

neither was his point of view that of the commercial soul. The bigness of figures as representing production stirred him chiefly in reference to distribution, and high results in profits agitated him very dubiously, indeed. He had, indeed, a way of perusing figures from a point of view terribly human and embarrassing. And he would mention his facts, publish them, talk loud and long (some people thought), and have intolerably insistent devices for creating uneasiness.

A good many persons thought him impious, a larger number called him conceited, and those who could conveniently do so without drawing too much attention to themselves named him "charlatan" and "fool." But the commoner folk saw that their bed and board, their nights and days, their food and leisure were in question.

Some of the uncommoner kind, who had never been found in a tight fix as to bed and board, discovered themselves to be notably disturbed in the higher parts of conscious existence. The firm outline of Sheridan's thought had the comprehensiveness of a simple thing, so that many looking into it found themselves startled by meeting therein, as in a mirror, the starved eyes of their own ideal.

It was, of course, evident to serious readers of history that Sheridan and his friends had not so much started an original line of thought as revived a perennial agitation in the very hour when it was likely to be successful. What they had, indeed, done was to cut, as it were, a channel between a land-locked country and a sea, down which the long-travelled ventures of dead men—fleets of thought sent out in prior times—might sail tranquilly into haven at last.

If anyone had told any of the pompous products of English wealth and respectability who were scandalized at the rumours of London Socialism that to a certain section of the English revolutionary party Sheridan's method represented a compromise with officialism, a surrender of principle to expediency, even reaction and retrogression, they would have been lost in amazement.

Nevertheless, such was the case.

There are ever some outrunners of even the advanced guard of thought who carry the fire-tipped torch far ahead, and, having long outstripped caution and slow-paced success, look back on the army coming into possession with beckoning hand and angry eyes.

It was shortly after Lucilla's Westminster escapade that Lyttleton gave the first of the series of supper-parties on Honora's behalf. Lucilla was present, of course, and, very much to Sheridan's satisfaction, appeared to be her old gay self again. For Lucilla, when untroubled by the too deep stirring of emotion, could be as careless and light-hearted as a child; apparently, for some reason, she had set aside that rather tumultuous mood in which he had last found her.

Honora, puzzled at her surroundings, and just a little suspicious, and on her dignity, was secretly the mark of some kindly banter and amusement on the part of the friends.

She felt herself to be certainly "in society"—*of a kind.* But there hardly appeared to be opportunity for that distinguished bearing which she had hitherto connected with her idea of a "circle." Lucilla fairly startled her into naturalness when, after supper, and they were

gathered round the fire, she prettily entreated Lyttleton to spare her a cigarette. Honora could scarcely believe her eyes and ears.

"Oh, Lucilla! My school!" murmured she, with irrepressible spontaneity.

Lyttleton's hand jerked with amusement as he handed Lucilla a light. Honora's handsome eyes were round and solemn and frightened. Sheridan chuckled audibly.

"We'll engage not to tell," said he.

"I hope you do not make too many sacrifices to the respectable," said Lyttleton.

He was standing by her side for the moment, his hands thrust in the pockets of his short coat. He was full of a joyous warmth at having her in his chambers, face to face with his own friends and his own life. A more than ordinary vitality was shaken out of him, and expressed itself in quicker movements and a more rapid, brighter expressiveness than was his wont; it overflowed in the colour and changes of his face. Honora, looking up to him, unconsciously sparkled under his irradiation.

"Oh!" said Lucilla, puffing away manfully, her fine little nose in the air, "I assure you we have to be extremely smug. It isn't our own consciences we are cherishing, of course, nor even the consciences of the children. It's the consciences of all the parents."

"That's an uncommonly long sick-list, I fear," said Sheridan.

"But I object to smoking!" said Honora, firmly. "Lucilla, I am horrified. Leslie, I wonder you allow it."

"Lucilla, give me that cigarette back," said Lyttleton, extending his hand.

"Indeed, no," said Lucilla, putting him aside; "I never said that Honora and I had to cherish each other's consciences! You must know," added she, turning to her friend, "that cigarettes and early rising are my favourite vices."

"I am sorry to hear about the early rising," said Paul, "because that argues a poverty in resource."

"It is only an excuse for gross idleness during the day," said Lyttleton.

"Oh, I'm no great sinner," returned Lucilla, "on either count. I am always too tired for the one and too poor for the other."

"Still, to prevent accidents, we might as well introduce it into the Socialist Basis that everyone shall abjure early rising," said Lyttleton.

"As a *virtue*," put in Lucilla. "And breakfast at eight o'clock."

"I don't know what you're talking about," said Honora, indignantly; "I think your world will be in a very great muddle."

"The servant," said Sheridan, suggestively, "always gets up first."

"And nobody counts it to the kitchen for righteousness," put in Lucilla.

"Don't mind them," said Lyttleton, in playful confidence to Honora; "we are bound, are we not, since we don't possess much solid virtue, to put in a little embroidery somewhere?"

"It would be amusing," said Lucilla, "if we could

play post in earnest for a month or two, and everybody take some other person's position. How abjectly helpless many of us would be!"

"Now, that would be an excellent thing," said Sheridan, "only I should extend the period. It would prove very selective for one thing. I've been working on the subject of our public schools lately. They appear to me to be establishments designed for keeping many middle-class lads out of the manual labour they are fitted for, and denying chances to the fine talent below languishing for want of opportunity."

"I should have thought," said Honora, severely, "that with compulsory and free education, and such a Code as I find is permitted by the Education Department, that the chances were pretty equal already, and that it was exaggeration to speak of 'talent languishing for want of an opportunity.'"

Sheridan turned quickly towards her; she was warned by the not uncourteous light of amusement in his eyes that something was about to shoot from his lips which would be extremely disconcerting to a distinguished woman.

"I am surprised to hear you say that," said he, promptly diving into statistics; "let us take London alone. Only one out of forty London boys continues his education after the age of twelve; fifty thousand leave school every year, and only about a thousand go on to secondary education. Do you call that any opportunity at all? The majority of the juvenile population in our unorganized system of education are sacrificed, while a small minority learn (or neglect to learn)

at their expense. Such a state of things would not be permitted in a state based on Social Equality."

"Do you mean," said Honora, "that you would take away the opportunities of those who rightfully possess them in order to hand them to others?"

"Not at all. I deny that one small section has the 'right' any more than another. All the same, what I desire is simply equitable distribution of chances,

'Joy in widest commonalty spread,'

instead of special appropriation."

Here Lyttleton, who was accustomed to read Honora's face, interposed to save the conversation, which seemed to him like to pass into the condition of a half-capsized boat whose sails have got unmanageable.

It was an ironical revenge of circumstance and time that Honora, who had cherished disdain—a very filial and gentle disdain, of course—in regard to her father's mental position, thinking of herself as a whole generation ahead of him, should discover a certain coincidence of idea between him and Sheridan. For Sheridan, however little she agreed with him, could hardly be described as other than abreast of his age. Now, Honora was conscious of feeling chronically shocked by Sheridan; his profane intermeddling with settled topics—university subjects, too!—struck her as turbulent; secretly she classed him as a riotous person—gentlemanly, of course—which made it all the more insidious. In his proximity she was uncomfortably suspicious that her mind and opinions assumed an antiquated air—or, at least, one

of middle age—as though a cap and mittens had somehow got into her very constitution.

From the date of the first supper-party at Lyttleton's chambers Lucilla to all appearance recovered her normal state of mind. During that evening her manner to Paul, with all its gaiety, had been a little timid and yielding, as though conscious of having given him cause for affront.

"Good-night, Paul," said she, in her softest voice, when the hour for parting arrived, and she and Honora were muffled up for their return journey.

And Sheridan, delighted to see that she had thrown off her mysteriously dark mood, considered his injuries already atoned for. During the half-year that followed she seemed to win back more and more to happiness in the natural routine and satisfactions of her life. As far as the school work went she had never flagged in zest and energy, but during this time she threw herself again into line with Paul and Lyttleton and their friends, following on with the general effort apparently without a repetition of mental uneasiness. And during this time Honora's acquaintance with the socialist circle proceeded side by side with her successful energy in the school work.

CHAPTER XIV.

THUS things went on until the early summer came round. And then it happened that a great popular demonstration was to be held in the Park. Lucilla, as the occasion approached, arranged to go down beforehand to sell Socialist literature to the folk. This was much to the scandal of Honora, who, though her opinions upon most subjects were being modified, held to her main position tranquilly with the fine staying power natural to her.

When the particular Sunday afternoon arrived, Leslie called on her so early that lunch had hardly been cleared from her table. He waited at the door of her sitting-room apparently too much pressed for time to sit down.

"Come with me into the Park," said he.

Honora hesitated and looked perplexed.

"There is a great gathering there, a demonstration of the Sweated. You have never seen these things—never been touched by them. Come and take your experience," he insisted.

"Lucilla Dennison has already gone," said Honora, yielding.

It was a lovely day, one of those gracious spring days which grow more beautiful towards eventide; the heat was unusual, so that the very sounds partook of it, but in the topmost branches was a little stir of wind, a gentle rustle that surprised one with a reminiscence of the soli-

tude of woods where the flowers are not so much looked at nor the ways too much known.

Honora and Leslie arrived before the processions and the waggons; but already there was a rising hum of noise. There were vendors of cheap ices, of lemonade and dubious appliances for thirsty, dusty throats, and there was the inevitable nut which forms the dry excuse for the remedy. Also there were vendors of literature more inflammatory than the nut.

In the course of their perambulations they stumbled across Sheridan, who also had come early, and who stopped them for a moment with a pleasant greeting and a word.

"Where are the hosts of my indignant countrymen?" said he. "I thought I was to begin addressing them at half-past three."

One after another various Socialist friends accosted them.

"There is Lucilla Dennison selling pamphlets," exclaimed Honora, in a shocked voice; "what shall I do? Supposing any of the parents were to appear?"

"I don't think you need fear that," said Leslie; "and besides, it is Sunday, when——"

"Yes?" said Honora, seeing his smiling hesitation.

"When we might rest from the labour of keeping everybody right by our own particular standard. But look out, Honora! Stand aside a little."

There was the crash of very lively music and the sound of a multitude of feet. Honora's first glance at the approaching procession, which swept on with a rhythmic precision of aim to its right station in the

Park, saw it as merely a gay picture of coloured banners and moving people; a second disclosed something not so charming to the eye and senses. It was Sir Thomas Browne who said that at a solemn procession he had "wept abundantly"; and in the English spectacles is often matter and to spare for tears even from hearts less sensitive and tender than his. This was Honora's first glimpse of a representative gathering of the overworked and underfed—of the English device in pageantry with which we make glorious the streets and parks on a summer's holiday.

She and Leslie were standing so that the procession headed straight towards them, Honora herself, in her handsome, well-developed womanhood, becoming at once the focus of a hundred pairs of haggard eyes, and when it paused at the foot of a platform, the banners being furled and the music stopped, behind and still behind over the shoulders of the foremost swept up and pressed new waves of faces, until a compact mass of beaten and broken humanity was gathered together waiting with uplifted heads for such crumbs of hope as the speakers might bestow upon them.

Leslie had drawn Honora close under the shelter of the waggon; he felt her clasp his arm nervously with both hands.

"Oh!" she murmured, "*what* is the matter with them? What makes them look like that? Are they all ill?—all together? What does it mean?"

Her grave, scared eyes were moving over the faces of the crowd.

"I'm afraid it is their normal appearance," answered

Leslie. "It means that they are habitually overworked and underfed, and that many of them whenever they have an opportunity take refuge from despair in vicious excess."

"It is shockingly—*ugly*," murmured Honora, "and—heartrending. I can't see a single face that does not look as though some injury had been done it."

"Come away," said Leslie, "and let us go to some other platform. I think Sheridan speaks from the next one to this."

Sheridan was already up in the waggon with two or three Socialist friends about him and some well-known Trade Unionists. He was standing to the front of the platform preparing to address the closely-packed audience beneath him, and he had removed his hat so that the fine, generous lines of his head were thrown into bare prominence against the clear spring sky. Lyttleton piloted Honora to where she could hear him, protecting her as well as he could against the pressure of the crowd. Sheridan by this time had begun to speak; he did so with more than his usual incisiveness, a wind of energy, as it were, in voice and face. The audience were listening with rapt and critical attention.

"They have a wolf in their eyes," said Honora, "as though they might spring on him and worry him in a moment if he said anything wrong."

"Do not be afraid," returned Lyttleton; "I think you may trust both them and him."

The wrong of the Sweated was that which had, perhaps, most deeply touched the heart of Sheridan, and he had thrown much time and effort into a study of the

subject. Whatever he now said was touched with that kind of emotion which has both energized and steadied itself by a hard-headed examination of the causes of a particular evil and the remedies that may be applied. He did not hesitate to appeal to a sense of injury in the hearts of his hearers, or to anything else that might rouse them to indignation, resistance, and the effort of self-deliverance. That kind of siding with the oppressor against the oppressed which takes the form of timid silence was not the kind of prudence to find favour in his eyes.

"I am sure he is stirring them up to anger and rebellion," remarked Honora, rather indignantly, to Lyttleton.

"I hope so," briefly responded Leslie.

So far Sheridan's speech, though not unrimmed by the large and golden promise of Socialism, had chiefly confined itself to specific remedies which might be applied in the present condition of society to the mitigation of present suffering. He had been answered by approving murmurs, which broke out every now and then hoarsely and briefly from some rough throat of the crowd.

"I have told you," he was saying now, "that what we Socialists want is to put an end to the great contrasts of this vast city—to level up and to level down, and to throw a broad and widening benefit into the middle streams of life, wherein the best strength of the nation is gathered. We want to pull the so-called residuum up into this, and so to order things that the chances of their falling out again shall be minimized to the fewest possible. We don't want to have this splendid Park and those surrounding blocks of roomy and handsome houses per-

petually contrasted with miserable patches in the City of London, representing congested districts of people who live in a soul-destroying struggle on the line of bare subsistence, and dwell in conditions which render decent family life impossible. We are able now to tell with mathematical accuracy how many millions in this England of ours struggle to keep the breath in their bodies at this bare life-level. And in this London of ours, this city of dreadful night, we are able to tell the exact amount of misery, despair, disease, and vice in any given locality. We can make no longer an excuse of ignorance. Out of the population of this London of ours alone three hundred thousand families—families, mind you, not persons—are condemned to a life of chronic want. Now, that this is so is a national shame and a national disgrace. It is our Great Defeat. We have had soldiers who have led our armies to deathly victories that have made noise enough in the world. Let some great statesman come forward to lead us to a victory that will bring life and not death along with it. For that we have in London alone these three hundred thousand families existing in an extremity of poverty presents to our legislators a state of things which it is their business to put right. At least, to begin with, let the Government put its own house in order. Let the Departments, at least, fix the wage of their employés above, and not below, subsistence level, and thus at least avoid demoralizing whole families of the workers and creating a new generation of the unskilled.

"But we must understand this!" Here Sheridan's voice suddenly changed its note. "Socialism is not a

system for easing one class—not even the working-class —at the expense of the welfare of the rest of the community; it is not a hocus-pocus for turning the misery of the East into the luxury of the West or the West again into the East; we do not want to transfer the relative positions of these two separate and, in many senses, alien cities. To do that would be to do nothing. What we propose to do is to build, as it were, a new London, a new England, in which no rights—of whatever the class is—shall be recognised, save those rights which are directly conducive or, at least, subordinate to the welfare of the community. We do not promise you things that are either impossible or unfair. We do not, for instance, promise you—as our Anarchist friends, I fear, do—to abolish Rent. If you tried to abolish Rent, you would simply give to the individual what should belong to the community. We do not expect to put an end to the wage-system: our object is rather to extend it to all. But we certainly aim at procuring for every worker a fair return for his labour and a fairer share in the leisure and good things of life. And since these things cost money, we aim at putting into our national treasury that part of the collective wealth which is to be traced to no man's skill or enterprise, but which is the slow and vast result of the whole collective progress. This 'unearned increment' as it is called, when we have come by our own, will furnish the Government with cash to pay their employés better and to increase the inspection of the workshops, and to carry out the crying reforms I have indicated and many others besides.

"But if I have told you where the necessary cash is to

be obtained, it is *you* who must furnish our legislators with courage to take it! If you will not come out of your inertia and despair and indifference, it is not likely that the Government will stir; if you will not put on citizenship enough to keep out of the public-house and attend the polling-booths at every Municipal, School Board, and Parliamentary election in order to return the men whom you will force to pledge themselves to reforms of the kind, it is no use our urging on the reforms. More than this and above all, you should drill yourselves until you are able to work together harmoniously; you will be strong just so soon as you press for Reform in a solid body, and no sooner; you will get proper representation in Parliament when you combine to return your own leaders and stick to them loyally—and no sooner. Again, you should step out of that isolation which leaves you not only a prey to the greed of the employer but to each other's necessity, and, postponing the small and doubtful benefit of the day to the larger hope of the morrow, you must band yourselves together in a strong organization of your trade. Fight the Blackleg in yourselves, and put on the new man of the Trade Unionist, is my last word to you."

The speech had ended in a vigorous sermon with certainly a sting to the tail of it. Honora was rather surprised when, on Sheridan's retiring to the back of the waggon immediately on having spoken the last words, a hoarse murmur of approbation broke out which finally terminated in a ringing cheer. The audience had recognised a texture of homely truth in the speaker's words, and the average Englishman—especially fellows

of the hungrier sort seasoned to woe—prefer truth, and resent specious lies. It was unflattering, certainly, but the conscience was purged, the hope fortified, and the personal endeavour braced.

Honora, looking round her with ever deepening interest, thought that beneath this sweet spring sky and upon this spreading green, palpitating now with the tread of thousands of weary feet, was a gathering nearer in kind to the folk moots or Witenagemots of old than might be found within the closed halls of Westminster, and that possibly from voices such as Sheridan's, and from rough responsive throats such as these of the audience, came the genuine expression of that Will of the Nation which is predestined to become its law.

"I want you to look at Lucilla Dennison," said Leslie, suddenly recalling her attention.

Glancing in the direction he indicated, Honora caught sight of Lucilla walking alone on the outskirts of the crowd; she was not any longer selling pamphlets with her pretty animated air, her hands hung empty by her sides, and her face was pale and anxious. She had a strange, isolated, melancholy look.

"I am sorry to see her like this," said Lyttleton; "sometimes I am irresistibly reminded by that girl of an overcharged Leyden jar. I feel that she overtaxes herself, and at any moment the delicate nature may break under the strain of emotions and ideas too great for it."

"Lucilla is very prosaic—sometimes," returned Honora; "just now she certainly does look like a *dévote* or something of the kind. But in school work she has an admirable practical talent."

"The Anarchists are hanging round somewhere, I expect," muttered Lyttleton; "they always disturb her. I do wish she would leave off hankering after d'Auverney's clap-trap and stick to Sheridan's lead."

Leslie, in spite of his brusqueness, was tender to women, and he was watching Lucilla now with uneasy compassion. Instinctively he glanced back for Sheridan, but could not see him. When his eyes returned to Lucilla she was still pacing slowly up and down. Suddenly, however, he saw her stop and turn, and then like an arrow she sped in a particular direction of the Park. At the same moment both he and Honora became aware that the crowded audiences were breaking up on every side, and that an ugly and more or less universal rush was being made towards the same quarter to which she had run. From that particular spot the sound which had attracted the people from the platforms reached them now; it was discordant and hideous—a slowly gathering roar like the howling of wild beasts full of hunger and rage.

"It is only the crowd 'booing' some unpopular orator. I assure you it's nothing! There's more 'sound' than 'fury,'" said Leslie, hastily, seeing Honora turn white.

"But Lucilla!" she replied, simply; "why did she go there? Please come with me. I am going to follow her."

"Whew!" cried Leslie as they ran along. "I'm afraid it is something ugly. The police are coming out of the lodges. There's Sheridan! Let us follow him."

The rush of a crowd when it is amiable and cheering is not a very pleasant encounter; but this howling anger appeared to Honora as something horrible. There was

a tempest of rage and noise and movement under the quiet spring sky—a centre of genuine struggle with ever-widening circles of curiosity and excitement. To plunge into the middle of it was the instinct of the male, to watch the mêlée as close (and only as close) as is consistent with separation from the fray was the nature of the female. As Honora and Leslie came up to the scattered outside circle, the former looked everywhere for the slight girlish figure of Lucilla. She was nowhere to be seen. Could it be that she had improvidently and strangely cast herself into the centre? At first all that Honora could make out from the scene was an indistinguishable mass of people surging hither and thither, then there came to her the sense of thousands of feet pressing and treading together in a single direction, and last the strange effect of thousands of excited faces straining with eager gleaming eyes towards one particular spot in the centre, and there the scrimmage, whatever it might be, was taking place. In the outside rings was "booing" enough and to spare, an infection of noise passing from throat to throat; *there* was silence and the tug of war.

"Don't you be alarmed," said Leslie, a spark of masculine joy at a row royal in his eye; "it's an English crowd and a mere matter of fisticuffs."

Honora stretched her neck and looked hither and thither.

"It's them bloomin' Anarchists," said a big policeman in answer to his enquiry; "Sunday afternoon 'ud be all Bible readin' and pipes for the force if it waren't for them furrin jackhasses."

And he pushed his way in, handling his truncheon and ramming his big shoulders like a good-natured bull at all the weaker vessels.

"Here come the mounted police!" said Leslie. "It'll all be over directly. Stand a little aside, Honora, and you'll—you'll see the fun."

Throwing himself close to her as a protection, he was a little surprised to feel her strong, lithe figure quivering from head to foot; but when he glanced anxiously at her face he discovered that to be perfectly composed, save that her eyes darted hither and thither in the same intent search. The easy measured beat of the hoofs of half a dozen horses mounted by policemen now came over the turf, the little troop setting itself straight on to the surging mass of human beings with an apparent recklessness that made Honora shiver again.

"They will trample the people down!" she murmured, in a low, tense voice.

"Oh, dear, no!" said Leslie. "Don't you be in such a scare."

The crowd, feeling the bound of the horses upon them, opened suddenly just where the massing of people seemed most compact; there was an ugly lurch to right and left. Into the gap the horses trotted composedly—great, intelligent creatures, with their instincts all alive to the harmless nature of the warfare—and then the police wheeling them about, began gently pushing and thrusting the people back with the haunches of their beasts. And at the moment, through the opening thus made, a sudden vivid picture of the central struggle flashed itself to Honora's eyes.

She saw a tall man, without hat and with wildly tossed black hair and a deadly pale face, who defended himself by energetic gestures and a storm of words from the rough fellows who threatened and hustled him. She saw hands raised against him, clenched in his face or clutching at his clothes, and ugly, open mouths howling derision about him. The man's shirt was torn open in the front and his coat was half off his back. The face flashed to her as the face of a drowning man flashes through the waves in a last effort before sinking—white, full of concentrated endeavour, the muscles strained, the eyes gleaming, terrible but never unbeautiful—a thing to remember. The next moment he was ripped down like a shaken doll, and Honora saw nothing but the backs and limbs of half a dozen blue-coated policemen who were fighting over him, striking out at the crowd with truncheons, picking some valiant ruffian from the prostrate body of the orator and flinging him headlong away, thrusting back others with strong arms, and commanding everybody in hoarse shouts of angry authority. And then the crowd closed again and the picture was lost.

"He was down, Leslie," said Honora, quietly; "he will be killed."

Before Lyttleton had time to reply and reassure her, the girl, to his unspeakable alarm and surprise, darted from his protective presence and ran straight into a particular part of the crowd—a part where the pressure and lurching seemed to him ugliest—and forcing her way through the mass with an energy and strength that astounded him, disappeared. Her action, following as

it did upon the composure of her voice and bearing, was perfectly incomprehensible to him. Then suddenly he understood it, for following in the direction she had taken, he caught a glimpse of her again. He saw her with her arm about the slight form of Lucilla, whom she was dragging towards the outskirts of the crowd. Perfectly composed, half a head taller than most, she was ingeniously elbowing and thrusting her way outwards, using her height and striking personality to assert authority, her strength now and then in a vigorous push or blow, her equable calm voice in suave entreaty or command. And within five minutes she carried her friend straight out of peril into the open. Leslie ran up to her, a great emotion in his eyes. None of the three spoke. Honora gave a deep sigh of relief, that was all, Lucilla stood still with a dazed look; then she began to pace up and down, her face full of an agony of trouble. Then she came close again to Honora's elbow. Lyttleton watched the two girls in silence; the amazement had not yet gone out of his heart.

"Was he killed?" asked she shortly of Honora.

"I don't know," replied Honora as briefly.

"I was too small to get there," began Lucilla, in a troubled voice. "I was too small even to see—I am too small to do anything, Honora!"

"Yes," said Honora, "you are far too slight and tiny a thing. You ought just to stand outside."

"It isn't his being killed that I'm minding," added Lucilla, with passionate vagueness.

Lyttleton's presence had been forgotten. He gently reminded them of it.

"There is Sheridan," he put in; "he is coming towards us. Perhaps he can tell us something."

Sheridan, unconscious of the little scene, was walking towards them, his face rather excited, but a laugh on his lips. One or two others of the Socialist circle came up too. Amongst them all was a natural masculine effervescence of animal joy in a scrimmage which, after all, had passed off without broken bones.

"He's all right," said Sheridan, laughing. "The crowd have suddenly changed their cue. He is being taken away to a place of safety under a strong escort of police. But the mob is going with him. They have turned it into a triumphal march now, and are irrelevantly singing 'Little Annie Rooney' as they go along. They all want to shake hands with the man and swear eternal friendship."

"Who is it?" asked Honora.

"A fellow called d'Auverney—a French Anarchist. He was holding forth to an audience who had no manner of sympathy with him. They began making cat-calls and shouting, ''E dun know where 'e are', and 'Git yer 'air cut.' I suppose he did not understand these little amenities, for he persisted, and then they knocked him off his tub, and a kind of free fight began."

"Was he hurt?"

"Oh Lord, no! A torn shirt and a vanished hat was the worst."

"It looked very serious for a moment," said Honora.

"Well, of course they got their blood up at last, and it is a bit dangerous—the humours of a mob with all their absurdity lean that way. But he's not hurt."

"I am glad of that."

"Oh," said Sheridan, chuckling again as the dying sounds of "Annie Rooney" and the cheerful measure of departing feet were heard from afar, "it is a very pretty bit of martyrdom for d'Auverney. It will be in all the papers to-morrow. He scores, of course."

Lucilla all this time had stood by Honora's side, with drooping head and pale, silent lips. Suddenly she raised it, and her eyes, wide open and gleaming, darted upon Sheridan. A suffocating emotion oppressed her, a wild medley from all the turbulent thinking of the last twelve months rushed into her brain—each incoherent idea fighting for utterance and scarcely one coming to the front clearly enough to be shaped into words. An agony of tears—not to be shed in the presence of these men—hung behind her eyelids. Sheridan caught sight of the eyes that held him. He took a step nearer, inclining his head in surprise.

"Lucilla!" said he, in his kindest tone.

That shook speech from her.

"Yes," said she, turning coldly from him, "you can laugh, for the laugh is on your side. They applauded you. They have beaten him. For my part, I believe most in the cause which the mob abuses."

Sheridan's face changed quickly. He was bitterly hurt, and the sensitive quiver that passed over his strong features showed it, though the moment after he was looking towards Lucilla's retreating form with nothing but kindly self-reproach in his eyes.

"I had no idea that I was paining her," said he, apolo-

getically to Honora. "I had no idea she was taking the matter seriously."

During the last six months, in the crowded business of his active life, he had forgotten his interview with Lucilla and her interest in d'Auverney, and the cause he had found for uneasiness on her account, accepting simply—as though it were too natural not to last—the later evidences of her full and happy allegiance to his own party.

CHAPTER XV.

It was one of d'Auverney's stock remarks that Sheridan and his friends were the worst enemies Anarchism had in England. And it was obviously true. The Home Office itself, the police, the racial instinct of the people against foreign theoretical importations, were as nothing compared to the penetrating effect which a rapid spread amongst the working-classes of Sheridan's hopeful synthetic method produced on the Anarchist cause.

"It is those *parliamentary* Socialists," said the Frenchman, with bitter scorn, "who are our irreconcilable foes in England, for they disarm the people's hate of the Government by their programme of energetic reform."

To call anyone a "parliamentary Socialist" was in the mouth of an Anarchist equivalent to naming him "traitor." To add that he was successful was to mark him as an adroit self-seeker and schemer. The theory of the Anarchist demanded a clean erasure, and he who occupied himself with merely modifying and improving a

present system, set himself, in these uncompromising eyes, on the side of the oppressor against the oppressed.

"'Ecrasez l'Infame!' 'Everything is at an end!'"—those were the capital notes of d'Auverney's creed.

But Sheridan was already a success, and his ideas were already in the swing of actuality. It appeared to himself simply to have happened so because events had continued to go as he had perceived that they were going. The genius of Sheridan lay in his accurate prevision of the trend of circumstance and in the swiftest possible instinct after the feel of things. It was simply owing to his possessing a mind imbued and dyed with the intrinsic humour of his age that he touched public affairs with such an inspiration of common sense, though to men who were more "abroad" than he was this speed and accuracy were inexplicable. To a section his rapid and faithful building, his power of synthesis, was voted mere adroitness; to a vulgarer type it became interested scheming.

Sheridan, his teeth set as it were to the heart of the day and every nerve athrill with the hunt, scarcely paused to consider the effect of his own personality on the various judgments of others; he took the good and the bad, the praise and the blame, as it came, and never lost his head in the issue. A strong and wholesome streak of humility saved him from too exalted an estimate of his own importance, and preserved certain valuable characteristics that kept him the affection of his friends. Scarcely a man was ever so faithfully beloved of his immediate associates, and that in a circle noted for a firm loyalty in friendship. Lucilla herself in her

moments of darkest uneasiness was acutely conscious of the claims of an extremely strong friendship, the point of anguish in her growing intellectual apostacy being its complication with this feeling of personal allegiance.

Unfortunately, the need for a striking martyrology was strong with her, and nothing was less like a martyr than Sheridan's bearing of joyous militancy; success of any sort, in the present condition of society, was banned in her eyes as an evil thing—particularly a success dealing with established and legal means.

For was not such success a mere new manifestation of *authority?* A change in the picture might be taking place, but the old frame rimmed it—the frame which had rimmed every possible iniquity under the sun.

After the scene in the Park, Lucilla silently dropped all intercourse and active work with Sheridan and his circle of the Socialist party. That incident marked for her the termination of an exceedingly happy half-year of life, full of freshly-springing flowers of friendship and association. An arid wind of doubt and distrust had destroyed it, and once more she was in "revolt."

D'Auverney and his friends now became constant companions of her leisure moments, and such time as she could spare from the scrupulous performance of her duties was devoted to the study of Anarchism—of Anarchism, that is, of the ultra-foreign type.

D'Auverney was a man of passionate sincerity—indeed, he had undergone suffering and imprisonment for his cause. This went a long way with anyone as apt to interpret sincerity in terms of martyrdom as Lucilla was. He

was, of course, delighted with his convert, finding it a very interesting and soothing task to expound his doctrines to this clear, sensitive nature; the soul-moving delicacy of the small face—the girl's face with its large seriousness of lips and brows—lent an additional thrill to a dogma that is always emotional, and the fire of responsiveness in her dreaming eyes, when he called on her to "*revolt*," invariably kindled new ardours in his own. The situation was critical and dangerous; it was a tinder-spark of wildest and most explosive nature upon which the foreigner breathed, in the heart of a girl whose English training left her curiously ignorant, though delicately free, and whose courage and power of self-devotion far outstripped both her physical strength and her intellectual capacity of resistance.

With all this, the personal attraction of d'Auverney for Lucilla was small. In her absorption with his ideas she seemed to pass him over, and looking on to the vision beyond him, miss a sensible perception of the man who conveyed it. It was his theory, not him, at which she gazed, and even this was dimly seen—though gloriously—and as through a mist. For a veil, as it were, of the older habit of thought and instruction fell over the vision just when she thought that she might penetrate to the end and catch the clear outline of meaning to the full satisfaction of her soul and intellect. Again, always the complete glow of her heart's adhesion was hindered by that wandering and reproachful reminiscence of Paul and his influence, which would cut across the impulse in the very moment of final self-surrender and arrest it. So far, indeed, Lucilla had only trembled on the brink.

D'Auverney liked best to instruct her through the records of his own history.

"I have been in revolt," he said to her, "ever since I was a child at school; and my heart was first fired by being witness of the injustice of a master to a schoolfellow. The injustice, even when discovered, was not atoned for: it was passed over—*in order that authority might be upheld.* From that hour I began to question, What was this authority, and what use did it answer? I found that everywhere, when examined into, it answered only the uses of injustice and oppression. Its more harmless manifestations aimed at least at curtailing and hindering spontaneity, at cutting off the way between natural impulse and action. What, even apart from those crying instances where authority is elevated into a system, is the good of a series of formulas and rules? Mademoiselle, I protest I have never once in my life arrived at handling a real living truth but that I have smashed some accepted convention on the head beforehand.

"You see," he said, "our obedience to conventionality forces us into cruelty in the most primitive parts of our existence. The doctors have laid down certain laws about our primitive appetite for food, and in our obedience to a conventional idea we think we are justified in paying our butchers for unspeakable atrocities: the lamb led to the slaughter-house is not the worst of these. Yet formerly innocent creatures were sacrificed to just some such conventional notion about acceptable religion: the Jewish God being represented by priestly authority as a fiend snuffing up blood with his nostrils—

all that, until the prophets revolted against the priests. Religion has everywhere, in every country, taken on the form of demanding from the individual sacrifice—and again sacrifice—and sacrifice. From age to age government has meant to the masses of the people authoritative wickedness and legal injustice. And throughout human history all this cowardly oppression of spirit and of body has figured, mademoiselle, as *necessary order!* But mark you! You will find invariably that the next age, sick at the result, has risen in rebellion against the '*necessary*,' and has broken it up. Do you not see, mademoiselle, that it is impossible for you to seek or to find your own true individuality until you have broken up and rescued yourself from all formulas? In the same way an oppressed people can only rescue themselves by a final and complete revolt; and you, whose compassionate heart cannot endure to take part in a society and a government whose very existence implies a languishing host of the outcast and condemned—*you*, mademoiselle, will throw in your lot with the revolting and oppressed people? You will join in crushing infamy? It is the only remedy!"

This was very different from Paul's talk. It was extremely inspiring, strictly logical, and rounded off to so plain and comprehensive a finish that it commended itself to a perplexed soul out of its mere simplicity. Now, Paul, if she had met and spoken to him, would have been sure to have attempted to allay her turbulent thinking by something excruciatingly practical and irrelevant.

"Lucilla!" this physician of the sick would have re-

marked, "have you any time to spare to help us? The county council elections are going to be fought hard."

She could see in imagination the rapid decision in speech and gesture, the prompt extinction of high-flying emotions under the sheer impetus of a strong mind alert for the next common-sense duty. But to d'Auverney the very conception of a council, even though conducted by progressive archangels, would have sufficed to turn him blue. The *quality* of the authority hardly made a change in his main position.

"What more right has an angel to command *me* than a devil?" he would have said.

There was no fierceness in d'Auverney's appearance. He had an extremely gentle and habitually considerate manner, and the expression of his countenance was mild and inviting. He had none of Paul's rapid decisiveness nor of Lyttleton's brusqueness; neither of these men came near to adopting such a fascinating courtesy of demeanour as d'Auverney's. The truth is, it was more than courtesy: it was a genuine deference to the individuality in another, to the precious gift of the Ego everywhere, breathing in his habitual bearing.

"*Do as you will*," was the final note of d'Auverney's dogma, and his slightest gesture was an encouragement to the enterprise in others. In truth, it is magnificent advice with a splendour of impossibility within it. The apprehension of its profound reach and profounder difficulty does not exactly lie on the surface of so simple a phrase; but let those who call this comprehensive instruction mere "claptrap" try to put it into practice for even so short a period as a single day.

For the rest, d'Auverney was a tall man of handsome features and colouring. His face did not possess quite the chiselled regularity of a handsome Englishman: there was a slightly exaggerated arch in the nose and the carving of the nostrils and jaw wanted perfect finish, but the outline more than passed muster, and his dark, soft eyes were splendid, with free and well-marked brows above them. Then he possessed a fine moustache and a clear, olive-tinted skin. His carriage was not defiant, but of a gentle, resolute dignity, as of one conscious of no spot of earth worth so much as the one his own foot pressed. His smile was beautiful, and it was accompanied by a pleasant glimmer of perfect teeth.

To a surface psychologist it may appear a marvel that so fine a personality—with the moment all his own—should have obtained no greater empire over an ignorant young girl like Lucilla than was the case.

It being necessary to her nature to cast the halo of her illusions over some one head, she selected for the purpose Louise Michel. The picture of that strong-souled woman leading the insurgents to *les Invalides* with a black flag as banner haunted her; it was certainly an incident to catch a young girl's fancy. That, she thought, was surely an historic moment! Such an act seemed almost commensurate with the burning ardour and capacity for devotion which she felt within herself, and which she considered the proper normal condition of the Socialist's heart. She would spend hours in her lonely flat poring over Louise Michel's writings and those of kindred Anarchists, her hot cheeks resting on her small white hands and her eyes feverishly searching from page to

age of the foreign tongue for some confirmatory sentence which should throw the vague premonitions of her heart into distinctness and outline, and bring her intellectual enquiry to some delicious full-stop of assurance. The strange thing was that she never found it; nothing ever stood out to her so clearly that she could feel she had given it full mental acquiescence. There were meteoric flashes of light, but they were lost as soon as conceived, and her mental condition passed again into nothing more distinct than a nebulous confused emotion.

Gradually a chill followed on the first glow; this abortive intellectual search was dogged by fears and presentiments and a sense of being alone. Then came a dull and habitual ache of the heart at lost companionship; it was something that rose with her in the morning and lay down with her at night. It had not the power to influence or shake her—for of what worth is the companionship of the body when souls are apart?—but natural feeling had its way. Sometimes she would leave her books suddenly, casting away with a sense of disgust the very ideas that had enthralled her a moment before, and, pacing up and down her lonely chamber, would conjure up to her fancy vivid presentments of her Socialist friends. To these she would talk—silently, from the mind. Long conversations they were, full of entreaty, argument, meek self-confession, passionate upbraiding, promises, and return. Finally, she would pause before Sheridan's portrait.

At this she would gaze long and fixedly, her hands loosely clasped, her figure in its simple clinging gown the very exponent of strength in slightness; posed grace-

fully and motionless, thus she would stand, and, looking at the portrait, she would fancy—it became, indeed, an invariable idea connected with it—that from the silent picture some influence of reproach and recall came out towards her.

"But, Paul," she would say gently, in an effort at a poor and hungry consolation, "I have not left you and the others—*yet.* I am only trying and testing to see where the truth lies. I daren't come back till I am sure of myself. When I do come back, I shall find that you also have got hold of more truth. There won't be such chasms between us after this. I am sure it is the same road we are on. One day—*one day*—it will all be as before."

Thus she went on, holding herself apart from the old comradeship until the summer term had run out and the summer vacation was drawing to an end—flying with rash, determined feet down one path and dreaming that the old companions stood still—even, in moments, that they followed.

And then, "*one day*," the inevitable occurred. Circumstance informed her that as she had moved, so had her companions moved also—*down ways of their own.*

CHAPTER XVI.

In a broad street of East London stood a small empty shop; it consisted of two rooms, an outer and an inner.

The street was a typical one—a main channel for the flow of busy, anxious life. A constant stream of per-

sons pressing westward jostled a constant multitude of passengers pushing in the opposite direction—each separate pair of feet, each separate heart, beating on in an urgent individual effort to shake out of the massed "indifference of things" some little turn in his own favour. Two lines of tramways conveyed cars full of persons hither and thither on the same feverish errand. At different points in the road, stations had been built as exits from railways leading to different points of the compass, to and from which shrieking engines conveyed passengers in the same wild hurry-skurry of endeavour. The cataract of sound which filled the air, the roar of steam and wheel traffic, of feet that came and went, of voices that cried aloud and spared not, testified to the tremendous pressure of modern life in the individualistic struggle within the district.

If you pursued the street westwards you came to rows of tolerably good houses, always interspersed with shops where second-rate goods, or even third-rate, were displayed; the houses were those wherein respectable dulness struggles to maintain gentility by the process of curtailing real life. If you pursued it eastwards you came to a more densely populated district and to houses from which gentility shrinks. But here, on the whole, the atmosphere was slightly more jovial; the depth being reached, the fear of toppling over was at least subtracted, and with it the dread of detection; domestic comedies and tragedies overflowed into the streets and produced for the casual loafer impromptu spectacles and a chance of snatching from such glorious insouciance a brief interest or mirth.

If you followed some of the streets southwards you came to abodes of the unfashionable rich—having escaped both gentility and poverty, here you were privileged to breathe the air of conventionality, mediocrity, rigidity, and repletion. If from the main street you threaded the ways northwards you came to houses of a smaller and more grinding gentility, to sorrowful rows of the doldrums, the sight of which prostrated the courage; and again to even more congested districts than before, where the rollicking drama of the poor shrieked from the windows and tumbled in the road.

Then there was the river! *That* was invisible to the casual visitor; so preoccupied were the banks with wharves and warehouses that they could only be reached if a passport of business—a hammer, or an invoice, or something of that nature—was carried in the hand; the strolling passenger was excluded. But there, nevertheless, was the river! If it was not to be seen, it was to be surmised by the feel of the life that clusters about it; by the feel of the flow of it—the dark, beautiful, stealthy flow, the burdens upon it borne buoyantly, heavy barges, boats stealing here and there, sullen steamers, and the shores black with mud and stained and torn with the deep track of human effort—by the dream of the look of the buildings on the sides, tossed up without design or symmetry, but charged, by mere proximity, with a touch of romance from that memorial flow between.

In this district, over the empty shop in the main street, Paul Sheridan had displayed his name, and the shop itself he had turned into his committee-rooms.

Lucilla knew nothing about the matter. It was an

incident of which all the world was talking, but the cloistral habit into which either circumstance forced her, or which she voluntarily adopted towards some of the concerns of life, excluded her from the common knowledge. She habitually skipped election intelligence in the papers; no woman desired a vote less, or despised election matters more.

But in the world it was every-day talk that, an important parliamentary vacancy having occurred in this particular metropolitan district, the seat was being contested at the bye-election not by two candidates, as is the received order in a world supposed to be divided into two patriotic parties, but by three; the candidates being Mr. Tootle, Conservative, Mr. Bootle, Gladstonian Liberal, and Mr. Paul Sheridan, Socialist. It was the introduction of the third man that made the occasion exceptional.

The political situation was indeed of an interesting and delicate nature. The ordinary assumption is that the lucky penny must always be in the right hand or in the left. Now, Mr. Tootle, the accepted Conservative candidate, stood for the right hand, and Mr. Bootle, Conventional Liberal, stood for the left. So far the clan Tootle had carried the seat uncontested in the Conservative interest from time immemorial; and as a wealthy family which punctually collected rents from the large districts of slums in the neighbourhood, who could have a better right to represent the inhabitants of those slums in Parliament than the present owner of them? But at the last general election, after careful calculation, it was considered in Liberal quarters that a very fair chance of wresting the seat from the Conservatives had arrived,

and the Liberal caucus having put their heads together in deliberation, Mr. Bootle was accepted as a promising candidate. In addition to Mr. Bootle's being an ardent worshipper of Mr. Gladstone and an empassioned Home-Ruler, he had vested local interests in the neighbourhood in the form of immense business connections and a big clientèle of employés. What more fitting than that Mr. Bootle should represent in Parliament the large number of persons to whom he habitually paid wages on the handsome scale of five-pence an hour?

That had been the situation at the last General Election. Mr. Bootle had failed, but the Conservative majority was so narrow that the wisdom of a Liberal attack upon the seat was considered proven.

Upon a vacancy occurring now, a representative of the clan Tootle immediately presented himself, and was duly accepted by his party. The expectant Mr. Bootle also again came promptly forward. Here, however, a hitch occurred. Things had gone forward since the General Election; the Socialist spur had pushed on the Liberal horse and waked up the Liberal intelligence one degree; so that in Liberal quarters Mr. Bootle, who consistently stood on his foregone conclusions, was shyly glanced at, as possibly not the man for the moment likely to enhance the Liberal cause. Of course the official Liberal fervently wished that things were ambling on as slowly and comfortably as before, and that such a man as Mr. Bootle was the square man for the square hole; but there was no use any longer in concealing the fact that he was not. If the seat was to be successfully contested, it was plain that a stronger man with straighter knees and with a

habit of hitting out from the shoulder was wanted to do it. Moreover, in the locality itself Mr. Bootle was by no means received with flattering rapture.

At the moment when the Liberal officials were thus perplexed between facts as they were and facts as they wished them to be, and while they were looking round anxiously for a safe man who would appear sufficiently spirited while never breaking the check of the "Liberal" chain, Mr. Paul Sheridan stepped quietly to the front and announced his intention of contesting the seat upon the invitation of the Trades Council, the Socialist organizations, the Radical clubs of the place, the local Trade Unions, and, in short, of every really advanced Progressive of the district. The announcement at the best could but be a very mixed joy to the official Liberals. It was impossible not to acknowledge that Sheridan, who was everywhere recognised as one of the ablest and most rising men in London, was eminently fitted for the task he had undertaken, but it was also impossible —even to the Liberal imagination—to screw Sheridan down to the dimensions of an official Liberal Programme; he was a man, look at him how you would, who insisted upon using his abilities in his own way and not according to lead and pattern:—certainly he was sound enough on Home Rule, he would vote straight enough there; but for the rest, his career was lurid and meteoric to the Liberal eye, and who could definitely say what were the contents of the tail to this comet?

The Liberal officials took refuge in neutrality. Paul, who knew very well that he could afford to dispense with their open patronage, and who very much preferred

being without it, took the least possible notice of these conscientious doubters; he had seen his opportunity and had gone forward at it with his usual energetic swing, and he was now taking vigorous pains to bring the matter through, without stopping to guess whether the fruition would fall to him or not. To the clan Tootle it was almost as though he had intruded himself into a family party and was insisting upon taking the head of the table; while by Mr. Bootle—who had naturally declined to withdraw—and by his cherished adherents, Mr. Sheridan was regarded as not only a mischievous and unpatriotic political adventurer, but as a political absurdity.

"You can't do it, you know," said Mr. Bootle, in general reference to Mr. Sheridan's ideas; "it's impossible. Besides which it's iniquitous."

In the constituency, for the first time within the memory of man, however, the introduction of the personality of Sheridan into the election awakened a deep movement of interest; this was pre-eminently the case amongst the large working population, whose lethargy, hitherto, had been the despair of Mr. Bootle.

The situation was interesting and novel enough, and excited sufficient attention to draw a cartoon from "Punch" to itself. The leading picture of the week represented two large and ancient house-dogs, labelled respectively "Conservative" and "Liberal," looking down in majestic astonishment and contempt at a third little dog, who, with truculent tail stiffly upraised, furiously barked in the centre. The cartoon was entitled

"*The Rise of the Third Party.*"

Meanwhile, as the talk went on, Sheridan prepared for the fight. The empty shop in the main street suddenly became a scene of busy life, and broke out on the exterior into an efflorescence of inscriptions and anything that could catch the eye and convey it to a point whereon the name of "Sheridan" was blazoned. Sheridan's colour was Red, and throughout the district was a pleasing dash of that staunch hue, distributed on street boardings and bare walls; the placards briefly recommended the populace to "Vote for Sheridan;" also in the windows were portraits of himself done on cards in a Red smudge, representing a fine head and striking profile. Sheridan walking down any street might encounter evidences of himself from any pane and at any corner.

On the other hand, Mr. Tootle's colour was Blue, and close upon Sheridan's Red dashed a blue smudge, recommending the populace in prominent letters to "Vote for Tootle." Then Mr. Bootle's tint was Yellow, and close on the track of the Blue and the Red came a Yellow admonition to "Vote for Bootle." The streets indeed became a silent tussle of competing colour which it was a joy to the passer-by to behold, and which was incidentally a great enlivener of the constitutional dulness of the neighbourhood.

Nor was Sheridan's portrait permitted to look out from the windows in isolated impudence. Mr. Tootle condescended to display a Roman nose and precipitous back-head to the riffraff of the place. Mr. Bootle, following suit, had his bald head and Newgate fringe elaborated in black lines with yellow fixings. Some of the smaller and less reputable windows, delighted at the

unexpected possession of so much art, displayed all three heads impartially in a row upon the panes.

Then there were the programmes. It was these brief breathings of aspiration which caused the boardings and bare stones of the districts to start suddenly into political gabble; every archway and silent corner dangled a promise; like pious Jews with their phylacteries, the houses bound the utterances of Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Tootle, and Mr. Bootle about their foreheads and upon the skirtings of the roads.

Mr. Tootle's and Mr. Bootle's programmes sometimes jostled each other inconveniently. This was the fault of a simple old bill-sticker named Dan Conolly, who moved into the midst of the election fray like an antiquated child in the hope of turning an honest penny, and offered his services to both candidates alike. Dan Conolly knew nothing and cared nothing about elections; he himself did not possess a vote, his importance to the State had not risen to such a point as that; all that he was aware of was that bills were required to be stuck, and that suddenly his services were in unusual request. It was indeed to him a golden opportunity. In these days of universal schooling Dan had cleverly avoided learning to read, and was therefore incapable of perusing the programmes, but he knew when the letters were right side up, and he had a wonderfully accurate eye; otherwise he distinguished between Mr. Tootle and Mr. Bootle simply by colour and the locality of the committee-rooms.

Dan Conolly's code of morality began and ended in a rigid sense of honesty. He knew of nothing more. When,

therefore, he found himself engaged on a bill-sticking job both by the Blue gentleman and the Yellow one, he registered a vow in his simple old heart to deal fairly by both. Tootle should have his sixpennorth of bill-sticking in the exact same measure as Bootle, and no more. While the election controversy raged around and passions rose and words flew, one heart stood quiet, singly and alone. The heart was that of the bill-sticker. He kept his eye single, indeed; his sole preoccupation being his bills, to lay them straight, to stick them fast, and above all to give each colour its due. In off hours, when he was not sticking them on, he prowled round with just pride in his work, to admire it and to watch over it. It was a shock to him to discover that for some unknown reason malicious persons had a spite against his bills. Every now and then he found his handiwork destroyed; once he came across a group of men tearing down a Yellow placard before the paste was dry. The sight threw him into an extreme agitation; the rending of the new and beautiful bill pierced his heart even to tears. It happened again and again. Each time that it happened he hurried to the committee-rooms and burst in upon the agent with a plaintive and tremulous cry.

"Sir!" he would exclaim, "they are tearing down my bills! My *bills*, sir! They are tearing them down!"

Dan's equitable disposition in regard to his employers bore a fruit too obvious, however, to be to the mind of either. It is not always rigid justice that we desire in other's treatment of ourselves, neither is the motive by any means always a measure of the effect. One morning, after an extreme early activity on the part of the bill-

sticker in the main road, an extraordinary effect met the eyes of Mr. Bootle as he stepped from the train. He perceived his own Yellow programme hanging before him with the stultifying Blue promises of Mr. Tootle neatly attached, in twinlike amity to its side. Going on further, he remarked another of his placards jocosely poking Mr. Tootle's, as it were, in the ribs; in fact, wherever he turned he perceived the same phenomenon: —his own programme friendlily winking the eye and shaking hands with that of his rival.

VOTE FOR BOOTLE, LIBERAL CANDIDATE.	**VOTE FOR TOOTLE,** CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATE.
Home Rule for Ireland.	One Queen, One Parliament.
Peasant Proprietorship.	Small Holdings and Allotments.
Reform of Land Laws.	Easy Transfer of Landed Property.
Shorter Hours for Miners.	Shorter Working-day for Railway
Non-aggressive Foreign Policy.	Arbitration rather than War. [Men.
Social and Industrial Reform.	Promotion of Home Trade.
Leasehold Enfranchisement.	Reduction of Income Tax. [tion.
Better Housing of the Poor.	Reform of Poor Law Administra-
VOTE FOR BOOTLE AND	**VOTE FOR TOOTLE** AND
Healthy Homes, Happy Hearts, Better Living, Brighter Lives.	Reduced Taxation, Unbroken Peace, Untarnished Honour, Social Reform.

The first pair of amicable bills with their beautiful Yellow and Blue effect merely irritated Mr. Bootle; the second pair startled him; the third frightened him; the fourth brought home to him a painful conviction; the

fifth threw him into a fury and sent him in a purple condition of rage, at a pace quite inconsistent with dignity on a warm August morning, along the street, in the direction of his committee-rooms; whence, five minutes afterwards, issued his agent, pale, in a hurry, and with murder in his eye.

It happened that morning that Lyttleton came into the district to assist Sheridan in his work, and the sight of the Blue and Yellow programmes startled him into the belief that Mr. Tootle and Mr. Bootle had made open cause against their common foe. Pausing under one pair of placards, he found himself in company with two coal porters and a dock labourer; there they stood, with their heavy, patient figures motionless, their tools shouldered, their trousers hitched up with string; the slow and shrewd faces being deeply and silently intent upon the bills, which presumably they read from beginning to end without missing a syllable. After the long, staring silence they turned stolidly away.

"Not a damn to choose atwixt 'em as I can see, Bill."

"Not a damn."

Sheridan's task was to persuade different portions of the constituency into supporting as much of the Collectivist idea as had so far been worked into practical legislative proposals. The voice that spoke in the Hall, near the riverside, had to be a different one from the voice that spoke to the select gatherings in the rich quarter of the South. Also he had to attune himself to different congregations as well as to different classes—for the hue of the religion passes into the political conviction. It was every variety and specimen

of heart and head which he had got to catch by his Idea.

For Sheridan stood for an Idea. To prevent the least doubt and mistake about it, he had published beforehand a small book entitled the "Parliamentary Programme of Social Reform"; this, bound in a Red cover, was sold at a trifling sum from his office.

Now, Mr. Tootle and Mr. Bootle had not hedged their political conscience round with a printed book; they were too wise to venture on such a record. And when they discovered that the aspiration of Job as to his enemy was fulfilled in their instance, both alike rejoiced. It furnished occasion to both when upon the Platform they were "gravelled for lack of matter"; and out from the pocket of either Conservative or Liberal candidate would whip the pernicious "Red Flag" (as it was popularly called) of the firebrand Sheridan, and marked passages of an uncompromising nature would be perused in agitated tones to an audience who listened with bated breath.

Mr. Tootle had discovered that it was impractical nowadays to attempt to hold the attention of an audience on the Union alone—particularly in that district; it became a somewhat somnolent gathering after half an hour's twittering on the subject; and it was imperatively necessary to add other matter.

"Rally round Lord Salisbury's banner," he cried to the jaded, open-mouthed faces that stared stolidly up to him. "I confidently claim your support for Lord Salisbury's Government in my person. Has it not upheld a firm Foreign Policy and thereby made employment more general and more profitable? It has cheapened the

necessaries of life, and has promoted legislation that tends to improve the conditions under which the working-classes have to live and labour. If Lord Salisbury's Government remains in office, there is every assurance that a Bill for the restriction and regulation of Alien Immigration will be brought in and passed. Lord Salisbury has his eye upon this source of straitened circumstance. It is a manifest injustice that the alien pauper—the foreign Jew—should be landed in shoals upon our shores, and should overrun the field of employment. It is a manifest injustice; and [*crescendo*] the Conservative Rulers of this Land will not permit it!"

[Uproar: voice of huge docker, excitedly, "I say, old chappie! We ain't got no manner of grudge ag'in them little furrin devils. It warn't no Jews as tried to steal the Docker's Tanner from him; and it warn't no Jews as come and tried to play Blackleg. I'm not afeard of a furrin Jew—not I. Let him come. And *welcome!*" (Cheers.)]

Mr. Bootle, apprehensive that a perpetual see-saw on Home Rule was beginning to have a soporific tendency even when interspersed with music and a hymn in praise of Mr. Gladstone, struggled hard to introduce new matter into his speeches without suggesting anything so dangerously self-committing as genuine Reform. His task of looking Progressive whilst shunning Progress was indeed a slippery one. A moment after promising a general alleviation of conditions, he would stumble on a particular admonition to Thrift; while impressing upon his audience the necessity of the awakening of labour to its electoral duties he fell into an admission that he was

totally opposed to payment of members; and close upon glorifying the dignity and greatness of the Liberal party he inadvertently mentioned that he was in favour of only just that niggard measure of reform as was necessary to bring his side again into office. Finally he would beat a retreat into safe and meaningless generalities and drop breathless to the haven of Home Rule.

"If you honour me with your confidence," he explained, "I will give my loyal support to all Liberal measures which may be brought forward; and if other constituencies will follow your example, these Liberal measures, whatever they are, will speedily be passed into law. There is one matter which is at the moment engaging my serious attention—and that is the importation of foreign cattle. This is a practice which is stealing upon us unobserved for the most part, but yet upon which a vigilant eye is fixed. You are throwing, gentlemen, meat and hides upon a market already overstocked; and the result is *to eat up our profits! To eat up our Profits*, gentlemen! Now let me touch for a moment upon a very alarming topic. We have in our midst unscrupulous agitators who try to lead away the people with vain imaginings and pernicious doctrine. Let me tell you, gentlemen, that iniquitous proposals against the rights of capital simply result in driving capital out of the country. While rashly to extend, as proposed, the provisions of the Factory Acts, is merely to eat up the narrow subsistence of the Poor Widow and to sacrifice this object of our universal commiseration to the ambition of vain schemers. In conclusion, I give you, I repeat, my promise of a general support to the

Liberal Programme, and to our great leader, Mr. Gladstone, whose magnificent object is to make Ireland permanently contented and loyal."

To audiences languishing under oratory such as the above, the resource of abusing the "Firebrand Sheridan" and the production of the "Red Flag of Revolution" from the pocket, was invariably productive of an agreeable sensation.

"Why," said Sheridan to his agent, when he heard of the practice, his eyes shining and his whole face laughing, "of course this accounts for the large number of persons who have called at the office lately to buy the book."

The Book had twelve chapters, each one expounding twelve heads of Sheridan's programme, in Sheridan's clear-witted style. The rage it excited testified to its freshness and force. To further the propaganda of his Idea he had twelve Leaflets, which were, in effect, short abstracts of the twelve chapters printed for free distribution. The twelve heads of his programme were—"Home Rule for London: Payment of Members and Election Expenses and Adult Suffrage: Triennial Parliaments: A Legal Eight Hours' Day: A Graduated Income Tax and Death Duties: Untaxed Breakfast-Table: Universal Old Age Pensions: Union Wages in Government Departments: Public Control of Secondary Schools: Taxation of Ground Values: Extension of the Factory and Sanitary Acts: Municipal Ownership of Urban Soil and Public Administration of all Monopolies —Land, Mines, Railways, etc., etc." The Leaflets were distributed broadcast, together with Sheridan's portrait and election card, by friendly "comrades" who came into

the district to assist in the cause. While not neglecting the rich and genteel quarters, the "comrades" especially haunted the congested places and stirred up the workers to their opportunity. The iniquity of it, when it came to his own particular clientèle caused Mr. Bootle to stamp round his committee-room in agitation.

"What business have these people in the district at all, I wish to enquire?" he put it to his sympathizing agent.

"There are trucks full of 'em, sir," replied the latter; "I see 'em every day, canvassin', workin', rootin' up and down, and givin' away piles of Leaflets. Where on earth he gets his friends from I can't say, sir."

"He's in the Tory pay!" cried Mr. Bootle, who did not in the least believe his own words; "depend upon it, Smithers, he's in the Tory pay. This sort of thing costs money."

"Well, sir! we must pluck up heart. He hasn't given away the seat to the Conservative party yet."

Mr. Tootle's agent was at a similar loss.

"I should like to mention, sir, that we must rub up our forces a bit. The Socialist candidate is showing a good deal of resource. I've never called at a single house yet but that Mr. Sheridan hasn't been before me and his Red envelope didn't fly at me from the door-step. I meet them walking in every street with a pile of papers under their arms, especially females, sir—especially females."

Mr. Tootle extended his eye-glass judicially and accentuated his remarks by moving it up and down.

"I am wholly against the interference of women in these masculine transactions. Home, Mr. Tompkinson,

is the place for woman. At the same time we might endeavour to requisition the aid of some of the Primrose Dames. From another point of view we must remember that Mr. Sheridan's activity is in our favour."

"As against Mr. Bootle? Certainly, sir."

Paul knew how to keep his office in order and to prevent waste both of time and energy. He placed one or two competent persons at the head of affairs and gave them clear directions as to what had to be done; then he flung himself with fine trust on the devotion of his friends, on his own energy, and above all on the freshness and vitality of his programme.

One evening, in company with Lyttleton and his agent, he set out for the hall near the riverside, where he expected to address an audience of working-men. The narrow street where the hall was situated was crowded with folk on the alert for a taste of excitement; a thrill from a greater life enlivened the strict monotony of daily existence, a momentary sense of participation with high matters; this stir in the air quickened the depressed spirit and sluggish blood to something beyond itself. Moreover, it was the turn for the populace to catechise the "boss"; on such occasions as these it was permissible and safe to permit the critical humours to overflow irreverently towards the "higher orders"; again, a row royal was possible and even probable. The street, gay with flecks of light from open shop doors and windows, and full of groups of talkers, was a great occasion for the loosing of tongues in argument. Unusual mirth broke the air up in circles of chat and laughter; it was a parliament of the pavement, wherein the respective

merits of Gladstone and Salisbury were freely enough handled, and the law on every conceivable topic irresponsibly but often very shrewdly laid down. It gave a particular zest to the occasion to know that the election was being anxiously watched, Gladstone and Salisbury, as it were, touting for each individual vote. That added spice to existence—to taste, even for one moment, the value of one's own power of choice!

"What about this chap Sheridan? That's a rattlin' good programme of his."

"Well, we wanted livening up, to my mind. It'll put Bootle's nose a bit out of joint, in my opinion. It's more quantity than quality with Bootle."

"Well! come on, mates. Let's get in at the back and hear what Paul's got to say for himself."

"Oh, we've all heard Paul one time or another. They've got it out of the Bible or somewhere that the love of money is the root of all evil; but Paul's one of them as knows that the want of it is the whole bloomin' tree."

"There's a lot in that. I'm of his mind. Bootle's fellows are coming down to hoot him they say."

"Well! Bootle's got *the Root* in him if he ain't got nothing else. I'll come on and back Paul for one. I'm ready enough to lend a 'and at chucking Bootle."

"I was at Tootle's last night. It's best to 'ear all sides. Lor'! y' never 'ear such a thing. 'E dun know where 'e are, don't Tootle. He rambled till folks were three parts mad. 'Bloomin' old chappie 'll never get to the end unless we stirs 'im up,' says a bloke to me. And then he done it. 'E up and shouted, 'I say, old gen'le-

meeting, and further had promised to preside in
The audience was small, chill, select. Lyttle-

ton occupied a front row in isolation. When Paul appeared on the platform, he was preceded and followed by a row of eminently serious persons who represented the deacons of the church. And the proceedings, to the extreme alarm both of the candidate and his friend, were opened by prayer.

That went far towards dashing the resources of Paul. His humour and modesty were alike tickled at this oversolemnity at his pretensions; it was enough to have stolen the wit from his tongue and to have frustrated his eloquence. But he found himself again, and fought through the distasteful moment on an admirable and well-planned speech dealing with facts and statistics.

"For the life of me," said Paul, when he and Lyttleton had escaped from the solemn atmosphere and were tasting the relief of laughter, "I could think of nothing that would follow appropriately on prayer except figures."

Next evening it was again an audience of well-to-do persons in the rich district that were to be addressed. Paul professed himself plunged in despondency beforehand.

"I've reached my highest scream already," said he to Lyttleton, "and I'm not at all sure that there's anything further to come."

The platform was to be filled with well-known metropolitan gentlemen who had taken up Sheridan's cause, partly in genuine sympathy with him and with the need of the district, partly because they had but a limited intelligence of the scope of his Idea. Sheridan's printed Programme was suspected by one or two wary and perspicacious souls to be a mere thin edge of a wedge. The

occasion was not one for enthusiasm but for an illuminated reasonableness, if such might be come at. And the result, though Paul had expressed himself exhausted and run out beforehand, was a display of native sagacity which if it did not win wholesale converts to his Idea, at least impressed everyone with the conviction that here was a man who possessed a genuine programme and who could be relied on to push it.

Nothing is so strong, so effective, as a man who can keep his Idea intact and yet knows how to draw men's hearts with the right cords towards it.

"We must take the Town Hall for a man like that," said a leading citizen as the audience trooped out; "we must not waste such a speaker on small audiences. I am not prepared to say whether I agree with him or not, but he ought to be heard. He is a profound and very sincere thinker, and a very fine head too—a very fine head."

Sheridan and Lyttleton drove to the station tired out evening after evening.

"Shall we win? Have we a chance?" was Lyttleton's constant enquiry.

"I don't know whether *I* shall win *now*; but I haven't a shadow of doubt that the Collectivist Idea is winning all along the line," was Sheridan's reply.

The grand meeting at the Town Hall in his favour was eventually arranged, and was successfully carried out, the place being three parts full of that rougher audience whose presence warmed Sheridan's heart and loosened his tongue. That was the final occasion of his oratorical efforts. These occasions were not altogether

to the taste of Paul. The toil of committee work, the necessary dry labour of the collection and tabulation of facts, were more satisfactory to him. He regarded necessary speech-making as a useful opportunity for the spread of the Collectivist Idea; but it was more to his mind to be laboriously working out some one detail of that Idea. For with all his deep invincible faith in Collectivism, as conveying within itself the only realizable hope for the race, and with all his swiftness in perceiving the next near phase which Social Progress was likely to put on, he had no clear feeling of prevision as to the ultimate form that progress might assume. On the contrary, his heart was often overweighted with a sense of blindness in face of the enormous complexity of the social problem. The more he worked at reform, the more inadequate did the sum of knowledge of the Social structure seem to him. And sometimes his passionate yearning was rather to *know* than to act. Failing such infallible knowledge, he considered the yearning as something to be subdued to the main duty of activity in helping the general need by what ready light existed. But it left him with an inclination towards hard, dry toil over detail than towards impassioned speech-making. And when he made a speech, it turned as much as possible on Facts. Few took so conscious a measure both of the work and of the limitation of human capacity in reforming society, as did Sheridan.

At the little office in the main street during the last days the work went fast and furious. Not only comrades but people of the district streamed in to offer their services; pens and ink ran out, blotting-paper became

scarce, cases of paper, envelopes, and cards were emptied as soon as delivered, and the indefatigable canvassers, directed from the office, pervaded every corner of the district. On the polling-day each one knew what his job was, and each one set his teeth into it and held on. Mirth, good-humour and to spare prevailed, but there was no confusion. In and out of the place men came and went, came and went; messengers issued from it bound on definite errands, and messengers returned with them fulfilled, to take up the next.

Meanwhile, Lyttleton had brought over a borrowed dog-cart, and was driving Sheridan—the Red colours attached to the turn-out—round the district. On the track of Sheridan, Bootle flashed in a Yellow streak. After him came Tootle in Blue and a carriage and pair, taking off his hat and smiling at the family constituency.

By eventide the space in front of the little shop was constantly occupied by an approaching or departing carriage—someone who had borne a batch of voters to the poll to record their votes was calling to receive new orders, and would immediately roll off again on a fresh errand. In the inner room the work of directing the messengers was fast and furious; towards eight it flagged. Then everybody suddenly relaxed their efforts and drew breath. Sheridan was informed that not a voter remained on the carefully-prepared lists who had not been looked after or carried to the poll.

Lyttleton accompanied Sheridan to the Town Hall to await the result. Mr. Bootle and Mr. Tootle were there before him, and neither turned round or took any notice when the Socialist candidate entered. The work of the

scrutineers went on silently and fast within, and the candidates waited in suspense. In the open air a crowd was rapidly gathering, a never-ceasing stream of people pressing on into the street. Towards eleven the road was impassable, being filled by a closely-packed concourse of persons. At eleven a signal was given, and a long low murmur of excitement and suspense thrilled over the crowd, a tremor of sound accompanied by a rocking too and fro. Then from a window stepped out upon the balcony the returning officer, closely followed by one of the candidates, the other two appearing more slowly. The result of the election was read out amidst the silence of the crowd:

Sheridan	2997
Tootle	2863
Bootle	2145

Upon that rose from the rough throats of the riverside populace such a roar as had never rent the air of that district before: it was a mighty sound of unanimous accord and gladness, for Sheridan, the man of the People, had won.

He stepped forward upon the balcony and stood there above the crowd for a moment, his face pale, an extraordinary surprise and emotion in his eyes. His appearance was greeted by accelerated clamour. The faces of the people flashed to him through the indistinct light, rough, animated, every eye upon him, every lip applauding, and every horny hand uplifted with a cap. His success was so brilliant, so strange—cannily fought for, yet so unexpected! His heart tightened and leapt in his breast, and

his breath came sharp through his teeth; he stared at them silently for a moment, then he steadied himself and found his voice. He threw it towards the mass of men who had chosen him to represent them, to those rough fellows who had found in him something that fitted themselves, and he told them with brief restrained energy that he thanked them for their confidence, that he understood the pledge he was under, and that it was his heartfelt intention to fulfil it.

It was not easy for Sheridan to escape whole in limb from the ardours of the crowd; but Lyttleton and other comrades had provided for the contingency of a rough demonstration being made in his favour, and a cab was at hand into which he was hurried, the driver being directed to go straight off to the station. Down the streets after him tore the hallooing crowd—the roads viewed from the windows became as a wild phantasmagoria of hurrying figures; a tumult of sound shook the air; the night was full of cries and of the steps of a great populace running hither and thither in a storm of excitement, so that sleepers awakened from rest rose elbow-high to smile and listen as the name of "Sheridan" leapt out on the darkness at each new wave of uproar.

Arrived at the station, breathless, exhausted, and laughing, Sheridan stepped from the cab and, under guard from his friends, ran for the covered steps to elude the attentions of his admirers. As he made a dart forwards, a mesmeric something drew his eyes in the direction away from the coming crowd; he caught sight of a tall, motionless figure standing in the centre of the pavement; fancying that he recognised a friend, he turned his

joyous face full towards him. He met from the eyes a cold and icy shaft of scorn, and from the lips a bitter smile of derision and hate, which even at that warm glad moment startled him. Then the man raised his hat and turned on his heel.

"That was d'Auverney," said Paul to himself, as he ran down the steps; "to judge from his appearance, the Anarchists are making small progress in England."

After all, it was a hard blow both for Tootle and for Bootle; and it was enough of a surprise to cause some talk in both Conservative and Liberal circles. The lucky penny had not passed either to right or to left: it was going away in the pocket of a third party after all.

"The ruling of Providence," wrote Mr. Bootle to Mrs. Bootle next day, "has, indeed, been in this instance an inscrutable one. You would learn from my telegram that the Socialist Sheridan is returned by a considerable majority over the heads of the more legitimate candidates. Undoubtedly, had not this fireband intervened, the seat would have been won by me. We must endeavour to establish ourselves upon a hope that this event may not prove calamitous to the country."

CHAPTER XVII.

To Sheridan's friends his brilliant success in his first electioneering campaign was a wild occasion of congratulation. Lucilla was the last to hear the news; it was conveyed to her by the lips of d'Auverney, and it

fell as an overwhelming blow. Not till then had she realized how her heart had played with the false hope that Sheridan would come over to the Anarchist party, and throw in his lot with the declared foes of society.

Honora's attitude in face of the event was amusing; that vigorously practical person was little troubled with disquieting ideals; her ideal had vanished with *Charmides*, and she was now thoroughly satisfied with the commonplace work-a-day world.

"Of course," said she, when Leslie threw his cap up in the air and informed her what had happened, "I am exceedingly glad to hear your news. It seems to argue less revolution and more sanity in your proceedings."

The date of Sheridan's election to Parliament was the end of August. But circumstances had so arranged it that both Honora and Lucilla were in town at the time. It was now more than a year since Honora had entered upon her duties as Head-mistress, but during that time her school and her work had prospered exceedingly. From the moment in which she had, under Lucilla's influence, thrown aside the shackles of the crude and fastidious notions which had been the furnishing she brought home from the University, humanness of the type consistent with the rest of her character developed. She was adored by her pupils. Her capacity for helpfulness was rather genial and kind than tender, but it was eminently to the point.

The truth was, so capable had she proved in her administration of affairs that already the pleasant messenger Promotion had reached her, and the reason of her own and Lucilla's early return to town was that they

were both making preparations for a move to a much larger and more important school to which Honora had been appointed Head-mistress. Margaret Henderson was duly installed Head-mistress of the one she had left, while Lucilla was to be established as Honora's first-mistress in the new one. Honora had only been able to snatch the briefest holiday at the sea-side before she returned to town to make necessary preparations; Lucilla looking very wan and overworked was with her. The promotion and the wider scope of work were too deep a delight to Honora for her to be able to feel tired or too much dashed by the early return; she was in splendid health and all her best instincts of wholesome self-realization were satisfied. Lucilla's new appointment was of course Honora's own doing; the girl with her far more daring intellect and far more original character had never lost the fascination she had exercised over Honora from the first. But if Honora's intellect was not so daring, it was really more powerful than Lucilla's; she was no follower of any eccentric will-o'-the-wisp; Lucilla, on her side, never lost her dancing mockery of the more prosaic nature. The two were friends with a difference, and certain topics and certain portions of Lucilla's life were closed between them.

Concerning home and her father Honora heard from time to time, not only through a regular correspondence—tender on his side, gently respectful on hers—but from Leslie. A tacit understanding existed that Leslie was to furnish her with news; and it is probable that the old man's life was better filled by these occasional visits from the sympathetic young man, full as

they were of encouragement, congenial interest, and the only news that was "news" to him, than they would have been by the constant presence of an uncomprehending daughter. Leslie often surmised but seldom learned what modification of view Honora was taking as regards that event. For a long time he was unable to detect any alteration of her demeanour towards it, any approach to a grasp of her father's meaning. One day, however, she dropped a significant remark.

"I seem to see," said she, timidly, "a coincidence of idea between my father and Mr. Sheridan. There is the same warmth of feeling as regards the oppressed—or I might perhaps say the poor and unsuccessful; the same unshaken conviction of some particular burden of duty laid upon them; and both seem to have in their minds some great directing conception which holds the whole together and gives it consistency. On my father's side it is the Church; on Mr. Sheridan's, the Community."

One day early in September, at the very beginning of the autumn term, Honora stood in the bow-window of her pleasant sitting-room. The new school was in one of the large London suburbs, and the outlook from the window included some trees and even a stretch of something that once had been green and lustrous, but which at the present moment looked brown and sodden and chill; for it was a drippingly wet day, and the pavement oozed with damp, and streaks of mist clung in the air.

Lucilla was with her; she sat at a table with books and papers before her.

"Who would imagine that little more than a year

ago I thought I was resigning every hope when I left home and came to London to a High School!" exclaimed Honora, looking out on the gloom with a sunny wholesomeness that overcame it.

"Ah! It is a good thing—a mark of wisdom to find one's element. Now, I never have done so," replied Lucilla.

Honora turned from the window and walked to the inner part of the room, disclosing a face that was serious and concerned.

"And yet you taught *me* that wisdom, Lucilla," said she. "I'm afraid you hamper yourself by peculiar views," she added, knitting her brow.

"As to that, in London it is one's privilege to think what one likes. No, Honora! It is not what one thinks, or even what one does; it is what one *is!*"

"But," began Honora in eager partisanship, "of all sincere, true beings——"

"Just so," returned Lucilla, drily, "I never could be adroit with circumstance. My natural veracity is inconvenient, and circumstance is my haggard foe."

Honora approached the table and caressingly touched her friend's hair. Lucilla appeared to shrink, as one does who is too consciously in need of consolation. Then she rose, pushed aside her work, and went to a low stool by the fire. She sat crouched down, with her elbows on her knees and her chin in her hands.

"Honora," she suddenly exclaimed, "when they said that 'Curses come home to roost,' they said it wrong. It is prayers, not curses, that come home to roost."

"What prayers?"

"Aspirations—our maddening aspirations! The man who had scales before his eyes was very happy, Honora."

"He did not think so."

"No—poor wretch, he sought healing. After that, no doubt, he saw things only too plainly."

She stared fixedly at the flame. Honora stood doubtfully by the table, her brown eyes softened by questioning sympathy. She was at a loss to understand Lucilla's mood, as she had been on many an occasion during the last twelve months. It was impossible not to note that the girl's gay mockery ran more and more into bitterness and that her dryness had changed to a passionate sadness. There were evidences of failing strength. The cheek was too thin, the eyes too large, the slight frame always slighter.

"The blind man who asked for his sight was a fool!" she repeated, stubbornly.

"I do not think so," returned Honora.

"They say it is quite possible that we are, in a sense, blind—that we may have extra senses latent within us, and that in process of time they may pass into activity. Imagine opening new doors of perceptiveness!"

She shuddered. Honora, with her solidly stately step, walked to a chair on the other side of the fire and sat down.

"I should be glad," said she; "it would be new power. Some of us would always be ahead and training the others!"

"Does that exhilarate you? It would leave one with a greater burden of character. Imagine having more of that!"

She laughed—her teeth twinkling in the firelight between her lips. But there was not much mirth in it.

"Of the many spectres," she continued, "the worst is one's own character! There is no hope of ridding yourself from it. You are always hob-a-nob with it. It rises in the night to appall you—to tell you exactly what it requires of you, and precisely why you are predestined to failure. It sits down by you in the lonely evenings: it takes you by the arm and walks with you out-of-doors. It is a ghastly companion!"

"It is just *yourself*," said Honora.

"Oh, no, it is not! I can imagine my consciousness accompanied by quite a different set of qualities. All training—all self-discipline is the hope of this. But it does not come true."

Honora leaned forward and looked at her friend with a searching and kindly air. There was something medicative in her eyes.

"I find my work such a refuge, such a safeguard, when troubling thoughts like these come," said she.

Then she leaned back in the arm-chair, her hands folded on her knees, and prepared to listen further.

"Just so," said Lucilla; "like the ostrich we hide our heads, hoping the Furies will not see where we are. Yet I never found a book so absorbing——"

"Well?" said Honora, seeing that she paused.

"That it could spoil the inward assurance I have that—that—I am predestined to quarrel with my friends."

"Dear Lucilla! You can avoid offences!"

"Not in the least, if you happen to be inconveniently veracious."

"Veracity need not be offensive. You can *think* the truth; you need not always say it."

Lucilla laughed again into the coals.

"In addition to my veracity is my inconveniently devoted heart. There is no offender like that. Did you ever hear of the 'Passionate Pilgrim'?"

"Shakespeare's?" asked Honora.

"Oh, anyone's! She 'leaned her breast up-till a thorn and there sung the dolefull'st ditty.' Or was that a nightingale? Whatever it was, Honora, I am convinced that he or she had been telling their particular friend the truth."

"Oh! By *all* means avoid that!" exclaimed Honora. Lucilla's eyes once more laughed into the fire, this time with real humour in them, though her lips were grave.

"Honora! How successful you are!"

"Of course one is never wholly satisfied," returned Honora, feeling that it would be indelicate to clap her hands any more in face of this evident discontent.

"You are something very near it now. You possess this school—a fine opportunity for useful work. And you have a large salary. And you have friends. I think you touch them lightly. At any rate, you keep them. I see you sitting before me with a wise and amiable face, your brown eyes kindly and patient, and your large hands so very capable, and I do not wonder that you keep your friends. Leslie, for instance."

"Once I quarrelled with Leslie," said Honora, quickly.

The occasion, the garden and the summer evening, her own voice and Leslie's came back to her vividly.

"It was," she added, "because he told me the truth—when I come to think of it."

"There you are!" returned Lucilla.

"Now I know that he was right," said the other.

"And you have forgiven him? You begin to bless him, perhaps?"

"Oh, dear, no!" said Honora, firmly.

"Ah! That is right. Don't quarrel, of course. What is the use? If you have friends, keep them. But avoid, in particular, loving them."

"I don't think I am that kind of woman," said Honora, dubiously.

"We never know what 'kind' we are until the plough turns up the soil. But you have all sorts of chances. Don't throw them away."

"What are my chances?" asked Honora.

The personal turn in the conversation softened and agitated her. Lucilla seemed to be speaking out of some deep knowledge that endowed her like a new faculty; and the sense of success dwindled in surmise.

"Your great chance is that you have got your foot well planted on the earth. Keep it there. Perhaps, however, the beauty of your case is that you have not got it in you to remove it!" Lucilla's eyes sought her friend's in half-challenging mockery.

"But still, I warn you. Don't be a Passionate Pilgrim and listen too curiously for the thrills of life and the inner significance of things. Don't play too much a spiritual, invisible drama. Don't, in short, be a seer and a poet if you can possibly help it. It is killing work!"

"I have always thought *you* very poetical, Lucilla," said Honora, gravely.

Lucilla sprang suddenly to her feet with a light laugh and stretched herself, with her arms thrown above her head.

"Guess what I am going to do," said she.

"Well, what?"

"I am going right back to town straight away, to study all day at the British Museum. What a blessing these Saturdays are!"

"Oh, Lucilla, I wanted to keep you for the week end."

"Impossible. I am off. In an hour's time I shall be at my desk with my nose in a dictionary and a sad array of dry volumes by my side. Adieu!"

"Oh, won't you stay to lunch?" Honora spoke with some anxiety.

Lucilla merely shook her head, and began in brisk activity to put away her papers and books, and then to throw on her hat and cloak. She had reached the door, and seemed to be going. Suddenly she turned back, looked at her friend with a long, startled gaze, as though she saw her for the first time, kissed her heartily, and was gone.

"Take care of yourself, Lucilla," cried Honora to the empty air.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LUCILLA found it horribly damp and cold and miserable in the short train journey she had to take; her sensations in the omnibus drive from the station to Bloomsbury were worse. The rattle of the wheels over the stones made her head giddy, and the jolting jarred her nerves. Then, all alive with diseased sensitiveness as she was, her fellow-passengers disgusted and sickened her. A great German leaned across and bawled commonplaces into the ears of two long-suffering compatriots, his pair of gesticulating, fat, and grimy hands spreading over their knees and under their very noses. The spectacle offended Lucilla.

"I have become fastidious," said she, escaping with aching head and nerves from the rattle and bluster.

But the short walk that remained before she could reach the Museum was an extremity of cold-clinging evil. The streets were wet and a remnant of fog, too weak to descend and too feeble to escape, hung in the overcharged atmosphere, afflicting the body with chills and the spirit with untold depression. Lucilla walked on, pressing her small foot down in the thin sea of mud undauntedly. But her face was desperate. Arrived at the British Museum, she did not find in the reading-desk the cure she expected; the dictionary and the array of books failed to inspirit her. Of late a singular lethargy had sometimes oppressed her, and a feeling of physical weakness and uneasiness hard to comprehend. Every now and then she shivered. At

last she concluded that the effort of study was for the moment useless, and, leaving her books, she went to the refreshment-room for a cup of hot coffee. It was no use returning to her work immediately, the power of concentration seeming to have left her, and when she came out of the refreshment-room she began to wander aimlessly about, looking at one thing after another, but with scant interest and poor attention. At last she paused wearily under the pedestal of one of the Nereids. The galleries felt at once close and chilly; everything was vault-like, and no object had the power to catch her thought from its own preoccupation. It returned now to the conversation with Honora.

"It was because Honora has not got it in her to reject my advice that I talked as I did," said she to herself; "but what would I not give to be able to speak effectually in the same strain to my own self! And yet it was foolish, random talk—with a bit of good advice embedded in it. What would Honora make of it all? I wonder what lies under her fine serenity. Does she, perhaps, love Leslie Lyttleton? How she would support his life—and transfix it!"

She wandered round the room glancing cursorily at the sculptures and returned to the same spot. She stood quite still close against the Nereid, who with bare foot and wind-filled garment seemed ready to rush past her.

"Yes," continued Lucilla to herself, "I would give a good deal to be able to tender such sane and obvious advice to my own mind—with a chance of getting it accepted!" A whimsical smile altered the thin cheek for a moment. "But I'm fatally against my own self. It is

always something mystic—*sharp*—that speaks through me. I have a goad in my own hand to turn against my own breast. If I want to step aside for a moment something urges me on, and I can't do it. What significance there is in everything! The one thing befalls us that *can* befall."

At that moment she turned her head with a restless movement. The arch to the right of the Mausoleum was, she found, occupied by a passing figure. And when she saw it the crimson rushed into her cheek and her heart gave a sickening movement in her breast.

It was months since she had seen Paul Sheridan, and that was he who had gone by.

The passing figure disappeared. He was walking aimlessly, as though infected by the day's depression. Presently he returned. Lucilla's eyes were still fixed on the open arch; an incredible choking bitterness had assailed her at the sight of him. She did not dream of running forward to accost him now; her foot indeed seemed rooted to the ground, and a presentiment of impending fate was the uppermost feeling of her mind. But this time he saw her, raised his hat, and advanced smiling.

"My successful friend!" said Lucilla, holding out her hand with a dry air.

Paul's cheek coloured sensitively. He was eagerly glad to see her again, he had so sincere a feeling of friendship for the girl and had missed her at every turn of his life. Her late attitude towards himself and others was, to him, a painful mystery, his information concerning her being of the scantiest. Instinctively he felt him-

self to be somehow an offender, but he had not the least idea of the reason, and his single object was to soothe and conciliate.

"It is a very long time since we met," said he. "Are you very busy reading? I was just taking an off quarter of an hour from my desk."

"I did not see you in the reading-room," said she.

"Nor I you. Perhaps we were both too industrious. But won't you come along now and look at Greek vases with me?"

"I should prefer a more unsophisticated pottery," said she, with the same dry smile.

"All right. Let us visit primitive man," he returned, glad of as much concession as was implied in her consent to accompany him.

Having secured so much, he led the way in the rapid insistent manner natural to him. His movements contrasted strongly with the soft, weary step of the girlish figure that followed. Near him Lucilla looked slimmer and more feminine than ever. Her face tinted and altered by his presence was turned towards him reluctantly, and her eyes followed every movement of his with a curious and notable expression. There was prescience in her look, and it lent momentary majesty to features that were chiselled for tenderer emotions. Turning round suddenly to speak to her, he caught the import of her glance, took a step back, and walked beside her. He had been turning over in his mind the wisdom of questioning her, and now suddenly decided.

"You have not been amongst us lately?" said he. "You have avoided us?"

"Have I?" said Lucilla, wearily.

"I think you have," said he. "I hope there has not been any special cause. I have missed you. I should be sorry if you left us."

"Would you, Paul?"

The voice that floated from her lips was soft and weary —like the twitter of a winter bird when snows are on the ground and berries scarce.

"Indeed I should," said he, with friendly heartiness. "Lately," he added, in a gentler tone, "I missed your congratulations, Lucilla."

That was the signal for a tumult of the brain. She felt her own thoughts shake before her.

"Were there not enough, then?" asked she, with cold self-restraint. "Why should I add mine to such a—*common* heap?"

His face fell a little at her tone and reply.

"Oh, never mind!" he returned, cheerily; "I daresay you did not think the occasion worth while. After all, my return to Parliament is a matter of very relative importance. Only I missed you."

The heart was too kind to allow itself to be hurt.

"And you yourself were glad?" she asked.

"Oh, very. It will take up an enormous amount of time; but there was hardly anything that seemed to me so useful to do. Besides, I like it."

"And you sought it?"

"Oh, yes. I put all I was into the election. It's no use doing things by halves."

"And then came praises."

"Yes. I had fairly to be rescued by devoted friends

from the hands of the enthusiastic electors." Paul was determined not to allow her cold manner to annoy or drive him away. He was hurt, but would not show it.

"Just so. And you had no sense of nausea?"

"Nausea? Why, no! What do you mean, Lucilla? I meant to come out top if I could possibly compass it. And when I did compass it, of course I was glad that my fellows hurrahed."

"And you do not distrust this success?"

"Not particularly. I am fully conscious of the limitations of our social knowledge; still I wanted our programme to be everybody's programme; the next thing is to get into Parliament to push it."

"The year has brought us on so fast," said she; "twelve short months ago they were still throwing mud and stones at you. Now they bespatter you with flatteries!"

"I get my fair share of abuse still, if *that's* a comfort to you, Lucilla!" he returned, with a genial smile; "I tolerate the mud and I can survive the flattery. They both just come in in the day's work."

"My faith will not carry me over this era of praise."

"What does that mean? You are not going back on Socialism, surely!"

"I!" Lucilla started. "Indeed, no. It is not I who am going back."

"I hope," said Paul, with the first hint of irritation in his voice, "that you are not going to accuse me of doing so? I suppose it is the method. We have differed about that before."

They went on in silence side by side until they reached

the potteries of early man; here they paused. Sheridan, taking occasion to glance at his companion, was suddenly struck by ruth at the pallor and sadness of the young face beside him. He was in two minds whether to relinquish the conversation or to continue it. In his perplexity he stood for a moment with downcast eyes, passing his hand over his moustache, as was his wont in moments of indecision. After all, what had this slight creature to do with the rough struggle which formed so large a portion of his life? Had he not better leave her with some mere gentle assurance of undiminished kindliness and friendship, rather than seek to carry her through an argument that he suspected was too harsh for her? He did not decide upon his action; when he looked up she was staring absently at the cases. He came near—the thought of his own annoyance absolutely extinguished—and regarded her with a very kindly light in his eyes. And Lucilla stood still, seeing across the cases and the stony remains of an age long dead the burning undiminished future of her dreams.

"Won't you look at these things," said he, "and forget my delinquencies? I believe I could tell you something about them. I am afraid I am a very imperfect person; but won't you forget that and give me what credit is my due? Remember," he added, in a still more musical voice, "that I am not able—*am not able*—to clothe myself with an ideal that is not mine, but yours. Will you not trust me? It is painful to me to be distrusted by a friend; one expects it from a stranger or a foe, but not from a friend, Lucilla!"

Her own name uttered in that tone struck her dumb,

She could not upbraid him. But her mind was wide awake to her own meaning. And her heart burnt, sickened, and saddened. She felt acutely the divergence between them. Apparently he had never understood her, certainly he was not understanding her now. But, then, did she understand him?

"Supposing, after all, we are strangers?" she thought.

A great tremor went through her, and she looked towards him with a new light in her eyes, in which something of fear commingled. Sheridan, catching the look, returned it with one of enquiry. Afterwards he remembered—and it was a life-long memory—that expression in her pale, set face.

The meeting of their eyes startled her again into speech. His own look became more wistful—tenderer.

"I cannot help it," she exclaimed. "I don't think that it is personal. It is that I distrust this phase! It seems to me we must be fatally wrong to have reached it."

"That is surely unreasonable," he replied; "some part of what we set ourselves to bring about has come, or is coming, to pass. We ought to congratulate ourselves. Hesitation just now would be a poor sort of tribute to our faith."

Lucilla threw out her hands with an expressive gesture.

"It has all been done through compromise!"

"Not the very least," said he; "it has been done through educating people in particular social notions until they came to accept them."

"To me it is as though we had passed into the enemy's citadel by the simple process of selling our standard!"

Sheridan flushed angrily. He was deeply hurt. But he mastered himself out of consideration for her.

"What would you have me do other than I have done?" said he, quietly.

Lucilla turned, drawing herself up tensely, and wearing in her eye a fierce bright spark.

"Do?" she cried. "I want you to come out of Society and not be in it at all. Above all, I want you to defy the miserable hypocrisy of our representative government. I cannot bear you to take part in it. You, Paul, *you* ought to be the last to have entered that degrading place of shams which we call our Parliament. You should have remained outside to speak truths to them like swords."

Sheridan's anger melted at once before the girl's passion. His manner perceptibly mildened, and he looked down on the ground with a musing smile.

"All this what I *ought* to do," said he; "what is it that I do?"

"You have taken their methods and used them to your own ends."

The girl's figure still quivered from the intensity of the flame that burned within. Paul threw back his head with a light laugh.

"Just so," said he; "to the service of the Social Idea rather. And what can I do better than that! I am in the world for the purpose. And I think I shall make some shift to talk swords, as you call it, inside the walls of Parliament as well as outside."

"But I want you——" she began.

"You want me to be very heroic, and very foolish

and very rash?" He looked at her kindly and the blood mounted to her cheek; a momentary perplexity came into her eyes. "Don't you see," he pursued, seeing his advantage, "that you give away your own case? What I have done is precisely what I ought to do. He is a bad soldier who betrays his own cause out of rashness. But come on! I want to show you the bone scratchings."

The girl bent and broke for a moment under the influence of the strong man.

"Oh, Paul," she cried, with a desperate catch in her voice as they walked on, and turning to him out of old blind habit for consolation and help, "I was so happy in the old days—so happy and so certain! In the days I mean when we used to have tea in my rooms, and when we made conspiracies against Society, and everybody despised us!"

A hint of something childlike and small reached him through her voice. An answering flash came into his face; it changed again and softened. Then he pressed nearer, turning his tones to a very gentle key.

"And when we despised everybody—hey? I'm afraid we have had to learn wisdom since. But there was a good deal of fun in it, wasn't there? And we were all very fiery and young and ignorant. It was a golden time, I allow. But we cannot *keep* such things, Lucilla. It would not be right even to try. I'm afraid it is a stern lesson, but we have *got to pass on*, and to accept graver responsibilities with older years."

"If I only could believe! If I only could believe!"

The words were almost whispered. Sheridan, who

was himself painfully impressed with the sense of limitation in the available amount of knowledge of the general social structure, could not but feel this search after a short cut to social redemption to be a miserable craze.

"Come!" said he, once more clearing his face to kindly effort, "it isn't as bad as all that. Why should you try to *believe* anything? Now I'll try to explain. Don't you see that the difference between you and me is the difference between the Revolutionary and Democratic spirit?"

"Is it?" said Lucilla, forlornly.

"Yes. I take into practical consideration existing surroundings and you don't."

"It seems to me we have altogether changed."

"We have not. We always mingled sanity with our biggest dreams. An extreme Revolutionist looks on a perfect knowledge of what must be done to put the world right, as existing side by side with intolerable conditions. But such co-existence is impossible. Part of the evil condition *is* our ignorance. Here and there we see a little bit that obviously may be done. When we've done that—*our* little bit—we shall be in a better position for fresh aspiration and fresh action. Because we shall know more."

"Oh," said Lucilla, "it is wintry days with me now. You talk of aspiration. It is lost in compromise."

Sheridan frowned slightly. He was himself too constant and faithful in his attachments not to be susceptible under the unjust blame of a friend. He had hardly the heart for the moment to argue any more. The energy

died out of his voice and the light from his eyes. Suddenly he felt hopeless of any genuine understanding.

"I really think I am pretty plain-spoken," said he, rubbing his hand nervously over the glass case in which the "unsophisticated pottery" lay unnoticed, while Lucilla's deep eyes gazed at passionate visions. "After all, when there is only one way, the wise thing is to take it."

"No!"—she stamped her foot—"carve a new way."

"Well! I must leave that to you, Lucilla. You always have overrated me." [A troubled colour crept into his cheek.] "Now, perhaps, you are falling into the other kind of injustice. I am certainly not a poet. You perhaps would claim to be able to see the whole tree of Social Progress at once. Frankly, to me the tree runs out of sight—into the clouds. All I can do is to see a little bit of progress at a time, and to try and find the practical ways in which it may be realized."

"You seemed to mean so much more than that!"

"I really do not follow you," he returned, in still gentle and carefully restrained tones. "You appear to ask me to act as though things were as they are not, and to blame me for not being in a world that does not exist. I find facts are so and so; I perceive that certain changes have come about—that they are here and mean to stay for the present. I must adapt my theory of action to the things which are as I perceive them to be."

"Is that all? Is there nothing more?"

"Not *ultimately* all, of course—but for the present, yes. We must not forget 'organic continuity,' I think. We have, in effect, to deal with the mass of average

men, and not with exceptional units. The method I select is one that tells on the present Democratic average. My ultimate aim is to raise that average—to make the average man all round a higher being than he at present is. But the lever I use must be an effectual one. It is no use trying something impossible."

"Oh! Are there no ideals any more?"

"If you want me to find ideals amongst impossibilities, frankly, I cannot waste my time about it. I must seek my expediencies, my actions, my moralities amongst sturdy facts.

> *'Still o'er the earth hastes opportunity*
> *Seeking the hardy soul that seeks for her.'*

'*I* cannot impose an Ideal upon facts. What I have to do is to find out what Ideal these facts are trying to compel *me* to.'"

"You will jump with the cat!"

Sheridan moved his head angrily.

"If you describe in that way a piece of obvious sanity," said he, cut to the heart.

The impatient movement of his fingers over the glass marked the strain on his forbearance.

"I call you to *go on!*" cried the girl, in a fire of indignation.

There was something in her feeling at that moment ruthless, remorseless. Paul left the case over which they had bent without seeing its contents and walked forward through the gallery, Lucilla following as before. Both faces were strangely disturbed, distrait, preoccupied. Lucilla no longer gazed at him, but straight before her

through a mist. Paul, stung by the sense of injustice where he least had occasion to expect it, heartily wished the conversation had never been begun. Even now, however, a sense of the girl's trouble and weakness left the uppermost feeling one of a sincere desire to help and console, for his regret at the division of opinion between them was acute and perennial. It led him to tune his voice to a tone of studied gentleness, to force back a smile to his harassed face, and to make one more effort.

"I really think you want," said he, "to break Society to pieces in your wrath. Now, I don't in the least desire to do that. I admit its misery and sickness as much as you do. But I want to try and discover what is the disease, so that it may cure itself. My faith that Society *can* do this is simply invincible."

"Oh!"—she threw her hands out again with that expressive gesture—"you talk of faith! You have let faith in method take the place of faith in principle!"

"It seems to me, Lucilla, that the failure in faith is yours. 'An all or nothing' business like Ibsen's Brand is fatal because it is false."

"Never say that I fail in faith!" cried Lucilla, whose burning belief in the impossible was her greatest misfortune.

She spoke with heartfelt earnestness and a breaking voice.

"Very well, Lucilla," said Paul, very quietly, "I will not say it. I will not be as hard on you as you are on me."

She could not reply; her breast was heavy with suspended sobs. Hard on him! And he not hard on her?

The world was full of some great cloud of confusion, and her own words bitterly returned to her memory now as cruel missiles that had fallen she knew not how or why, but which had certainly failed to convey her meaning. It was no use speaking any more—speech was a mere rending of each spirit with theories, and their friendship lay like a torn thing between them. How was it that the little rift in the lute had widened to this ruined music?

Paul's heart was full of ruth at what had happened; he would have given much to erase the impression from his own mind and from hers; but he was conscious that every reach he had made across this chasm of divergent opinion to the reality of friendship beyond had been repulsed by the girl, and that with bitter words. He looked pale and worried and kept raising his hand nervously to his moustache. He found it hard to bear the implied blame from Lucilla; he regretted her attitude, missed her sympathy and disliked her discouragement; and all the time it chafed him to be unable to detect whence the difference arose.

Neither was responsible and neither was to blame. Phases of mind and character are not synchronous even between friends; and the people who jostle each other in the street are not of the same hour or century. This makes the difficulty and delicacy in human intercourse, the pain of it, and the sweetness of forbearance and forgiveness or the bitterness of anger and revenge.

But, after all, to Sheridan, when the most was said, the incident was but one in the day; a thousand calls would presently obliterate it from his mind. As they neared

the entrance to the bust gallery, he shook off the depression which had seized him and turned to Lucilla with rather a chillily bright air.

Lucilla, to whom, on the contrary, every one of his words had fallen like a never-lifting pall, stopped short, feeling that the interview was at an end. Paul drew out his watch and glanced at it. They stood under the five-legged Assyrian Bull, whose stony brutality might well have represented to one at least of the pair the barbarity of circumstance.

Besides divergence of opinion, the barrier of sex was between them. Lucilla was too preoccupied to feel it; the better-instructed man was sharply conscious of it for the moment. Since all naturalness and spontaneity and coincidence of thought had passed out of their friendship, nothing remained but for him to leave her alone. He was not her lover; the only right he had in her was the right that came from her spontaneous allegiance; that gone, he was not in a position to attempt a conquest.

"I must be off," he said, holding out his hand to bid her adieu, his face pale and full of ruth and compunction; "I am due at an appointment in less than a quarter of an hour. Good-bye. I am sincerely sorry we have differed. Try and do as much justice to me as you can. I shall always think well of you. But don't expect too much of me. I am nothing after all but a strong earth man—not the least of an angel, you know. Adieu. *Au revoir!*"

He held her hand warmly for a second, his eyes asking pardon the while; hers did not grant it; and then he turned away. Lucilla looked after him in dumb agony.

To her the termination of the interview had terrible significance; for she knew that it had pushed her over the brink.

CHAPTER XIX.

It is a frightful thing when a judgment against an idolized friend first darts into the mind; it is worse when we begin to be so conscious of it that we are in constant terrified expectation of its reappearance—as one is conscious of the grim thing hidden somewhere in the far-off chamber of a dream. But if, instead of gliding in to disappear again like some evil vermin leaving us scared and panting, it come in boldly and take possession of the very hearth, then, indeed, something like desolation has fallen.

"Do I any longer believe in him?"

Those were the words which Lucilla kept out of her mind as well as she could.

It had been cold in the Galleries even; when she turned into the open air it struck her keenly, and the damp and the fog made her shiver. She walked wearily, feeling that with the depression of her spirits all her physical energy had vanished; the climb up the stone staircase to her flat was made by an effort that seemed stupendous, and she thought it was because she was so desperately out of heart that the idea of preparing her evening meal was distasteful. Finally she decided that it was as impossible as a labour of Hercules and that, besides, she had no appetite.

The room was horribly cold and dark, and she lit the fire at once, crouching down before it to try and get a little warmth into her hands and body. Seated there, she finally forgot about her food and fell into a deep mental struggle. Holding her trembling hands out to the bars, her face looked pinched and wan; and unheeded tears rolled down her cheeks.

In the girl's soul was a straight, rigid something which could allow no compromise—not even the capitulation of high wisdom.

It was not an ordinary emotion that sickened her spirit, not jealousy, disappointed affection, or selfish fear and regret; Lucilla's tears had not that quality.

"*Oh, my friend—my friend! Only be true! Only let me believe in you still! I need nothing further.*"

There was hardly a variation of her thought as she sat on the hearth-rug trying to keep warm, while hours passed over her head; it was all in that key, all in that strain. The belief in Paul was inextricably intertwined with her allegiance to her old party; should the one be disturbed, the other broke down. He stood for his party in the very essence of his nature, and her rupture with him was her dissent from all. When he left her in the Museum she knew that she was cut adrift, but the scission was not to be made without cries and protests of the heart and affections. It was a sacrificial event, a painful act of self-isolation made by a rigid will and a passionately tender nature. Just because it was so hard it had to be, she thought, inexorably final.

It happened that Honora, turning over in her large and comfortable mind, after Lucilla had left her, the con-

versation they had just held together, concluded that the condition which prompted such talk indicated illness; whereupon the idea of her friend alone in the workman's flat disturbed her, and late in the afternoon she made up her mind to follow and see for herself if attention was required. Thus it happened that towards evening, when it was already dark, Honora stepped out of the station and hailed a Bloomsbury omnibus.

Upon arriving at the workman's flat, she found the door was ajar; that was a sure sign that Lucilla had returned—indeed, she heard sounds within. In spite of this her knock failed to secure attention, so, after a moment's hesitation, she pushed the door wider and looked in.

Yes, Lucilla was there; she was standing in the inner room, holding a hammer in her hand. Her eyes were fixed on the place on the wall where, above the portrait of Sheridan, had formerly hung the crucifix. This now lay in broken pieces on the ground, and, as Honora entered unperceived, Lucilla raised her hand and dealt a blow at the portrait. It was vigorously and firmly delivered, so that the glass was instantly shivered into fragments and the picture ruined. There was deliberation rather than passion in her manner; but so absorbed was she that the presence of Honora was still unnoticed.

Honora beheld the spectacle of the freshly-murdered Christ with a keen illogical sense of desecration and dismay. And of the broken portrait with a more human pang.

"Lucilla!" whispered she.

Lucilla started and faced her, letting her arms fall to

her sides. A flush followed by pallor altered her cheek.

"Ah!" said she, with her stillest manner. "For work like this I should have locked the door."

Honora's eyes fixed on the shattered crucifix filled with tears. The early association of her life was strong for the moment, and all her best thoughts of her father mingled with the broken image.

"What have you done to the crucifix?" said she.

And then she looked at the shattered picture, and raising her hand, pointed to that also in enquiry.

Lucilla, her hammer still grasped in her slight hand, took a turn or two through the room, after which she came back and faced her friend.

"What have I done with that Christ?" she repeated. "I suppose I am slaying Him afresh. He is the personal in us. We have to slay the personal. Now, our leaning on Him is all personal. We have got to stand alone."

She spoke steadily, looking at Honora all the time with a white face and pathetic eyes.

Honora was still speechless and stupefied and had tears under her lids.

Lucilla laid the hammer on the table and placed both hands on her friend's shoulders.

"Democracy, O Democracy!" murmured she, under her breath.

At this Honora roused herself and began to speak with extraordinary energy.

"Fudge!" said she, with an impatient stamp of the foot. "I thought Mr. Sheridan stood for Democracy!

And now you've smashed him up—smashed him brutally, Lucilla, breaking his nose and knocking in his clever eyes. As to the crucifix—I hate such work. I've no reason to love the church,—it came between my own father and me—still, I never see a crucifix but I think of him; and, on the whole, I'd rather you had levelled your wicked, random blows at me than at the Christ."

She had broken from her friend and was down on her knees picking up the fragments and gathering them in her dress, the angry tears rolling the while over her cheeks. When all the portions were collected she carried them to the table; then she took the portrait and sat down, patiently endeavouring to make the injury it had sustained a degree less ugly and apparent. All the time Lucilla, who had seated herself by the fire, remained passive, with her face rather coldly turned aside.

"It is no use," said Honora, wiping her eyes. "I can't mend him. I can't see for tears. I am afraid that he is spoiled for good. I never should have dreamed you could be guilty of an act of frenzy like this."

"I don't think that it was frenzy," said Lucilla, quietly; "I was not angry."

"It looked uncommonly like it," said Honora, whose eyes and voice alike snapped in her hearty indignation; "well, I can't mend it, as I say. Neither can I put the crucifix together again. Let me at least cover up the fragments decently."

"Put the portrait in the fire," said Lucilla.

"Do that yourself. I don't like the man; he is no friend of mine; but I declare I have not the heart to burn him."

"Then give it to me."

Honora did not move. Lucilla got up, reached her hand quietly to the portrait, sat down again, and held it in the flame until it was consumed. Then she took the frame, deliberately broke it across her knee, and put the pieces on the top of the fire. She sat and watched them burn. Honora drew a deep breath.

"I think that a wicked piece of hardness," said she.

"Honora," said Lucilla—"*don't!*"

"What has Mr. Sheridan done?"

"Nothing. Nothing special."

"When did you see him last?"

"About an hour ago."

"As though," exclaimed Honora, in fresh indignation, "an hour were sufficient interval between impulse and action. For, indeed, it is action with a vengeance to come and take a hammer to the face of a friend."

"But it was not impulse. I know what I was about. I am sure of my own meaning."

"You never can be sure of anything when you are in a rage."

"Honora, I was *not* in a rage. I repeat that I was not angry. You don't understand."

"Oh, I do!" said Honora. "I understand better than you do. You call it something grand. I name it mere fury. Mr. Sheridan probably said something detestable—to do you and him justice he can manage that sort of thing fairly well—and you came home in a rage. And there was the hammer and there was his face. And you flew at him like a wicked child. That is the whole tale, Lucilla."

"Honora!"

"Yes?"

"Mr. Sheridan said nothing detestable. It was I who said all the detestable things."

"That reflection, then, probably deepened your anger. It makes it clear. Of course if anger is intolerable it is just as well to do *something* to ease it. But you should always keep an eye on the future moment, which you have not done—I mean the inevitable, sober moment which will arrive to find the anger gone. It really is a mere point of sanity to remember that emotion is not always boiling over."

Lucilla sat still, looking into the fire.

"Now, as I believe I told you, I once was very, very angry with a friend. I once found it imperatively necessary to do something rash with Leslie Lyttleton's face. He had infuriated me, and I really could not bear to have it hanging in my room and insulting me. But I did not rush at him with a hammer. Really, Lucilla! What an atrocity! I just slammed it in a drawer and turned the key on it. And there it lay for months. For *months*, Lucilla!"

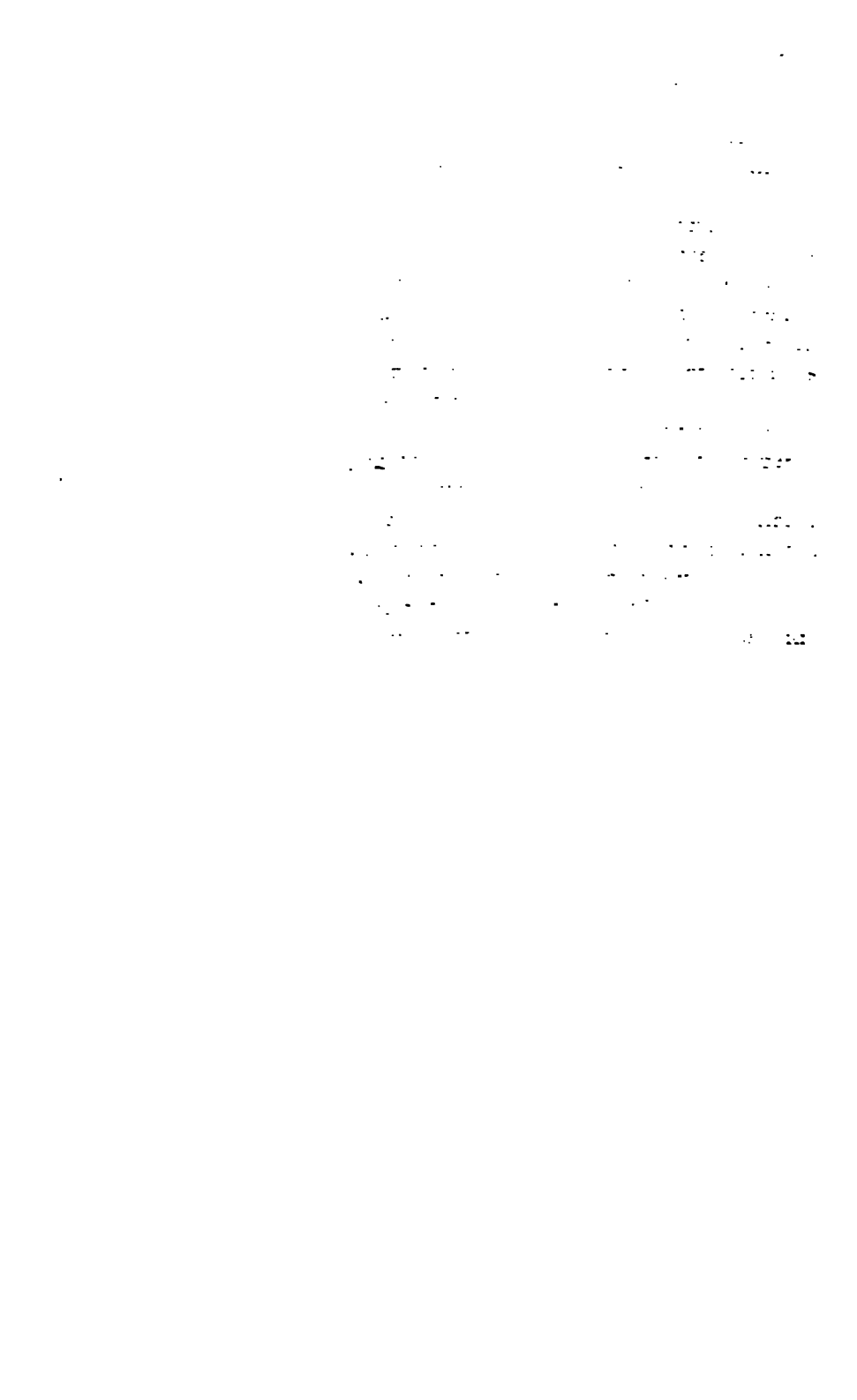
"Did it?"

"Yes; for months. And when I took it back again, you understand that it had quite a friendly air?"

"There is no point of resemblance," said Lucilla. "I beg you to believe me."

"Oh, yes, there is," said Honora; "human-nature is pretty much the same everywhere, even Socialist human-nature. Particularly quarrels."

"Is this a quarrel?"



plenty of love, though perhaps of a humble kind. A picture of that type will be better to hang from the nail on your wall than—Sacrifice and—*Democracy.*"

She uttered the last word with a subtle careless scorn —as though it were a trifle, an air-ball, that the prick of a pin could collapse. She laughed a little with her lips close to Lucilla's ear as she said, with gentle derision, "You are too tiny for such *grand* ideas."

Lucilla said nothing. A tear or two slipped from under her lids.

"Once," continued Honora, rather timidly, "I thought I could do without my father's love. I considered that he had wronged me; and when I had to leave him I went away with my heart cold. I am beginning to learn —I think it came through our work with the children; I think perhaps you taught me—I am beginning to learn that I cannot do without it. That whether he wronged me or not, I must win his love again."

She took Lucilla's hand.

"Your hand is very cold," said she; "and now we have come to the end of the lecture. Your cheek is hot. That means that you are ill. Have you had food?"

"No. I have not felt hungry."

"Well, then! You are going to bed. And I shall prepare you some food. To tell the honest truth, I suspected the worst and brought something dainty in a basket. Now I will help you to undress, and until you are asleep I will stay with you."

It was in this way that the bitter day came to an end. It finished up for Lucilla in an unlooked-for sense of

consolation. She lay, tired beyond anything that she had guessed, in a room full of light and warmth, the hand of a friend had fed her, Honora's comely form was within her eye, her strong presence near; she sang, too, softly in a clear, sweet voice. Lucilla had no idea that Honora could sing; then she chose such pretty melodies —not too bright, but mild and swaying; surely that was not a "Wiegenlied"? How strange of Honora! It was very pleasant; it was springtime—twilight, when the shadows are tender—birds crept to their nests. And so, listening, she fell asleep.

CHAPTER XX.

LUCILLA never once wavered in the resolution she had taken after Sheridan's election and her interview with him. And for a couple of months at least she had no intercourse either with him or her other friends of his set. Time did not mitigate her view of his attitude; on the contrary, his sagacity and "Time-Wisdom" took to her eyes increasingly an aspect of treachery to the cause. It was with consuming grief that she thought of him, but never with a hint of return.

D'Auverney's position, on the other hand, came nearer suiting the rigid Ideal which she had set up as Truth; it fitted better the useless puristic Socialism which her mental proclivities led her to adopt; and she had gone over to him and his set heart and soul, as she believed. And as new converts are apt to do, she made herself

particularly active in propaganda work, throwing most unsparing efforts into it. Indeed, she urged her crude dogma of revolt with an unhesitating energy which would have been shocking had not the strength of it been so fine.

Sheridan, in spite of his new interests and busy life, did not forget Lucilla. Rumours of her definite adhesion to the Anarchist party had reached him and affected him with genuine sorrow; he never thought of her save with a pang of pity and regret; he was occasionally prompted to write to her, but hesitation so far had baffled the half-formed desire. He could not make up his mind as to the wisdom of approaching her again, even of the right of it; at the same time, he was not able to set the idea completely aside.

In Honora's new school Lucilla performed her duties with exhausting pertinacity. Honora was tempted at times to regret the touch of feverishness she put into her energies; the growing frailty of her form alarmed her, and what, too, had altered her eyes and made them look so strained and harsh? Lucilla met every enquiry as to her health with an air of surprise; but she bent more and more to her friend's devotion, throwing herself pathetically under the shadow of Honora's wise protective affection, yet never so far yielding to it as to permit it to save her. Honora, even in the girl's softest moments, felt that she touched her over some circle of reticence which nothing could induce her to break down. Meanwhile, the affection penetrated more and more into her own nature and became something singularly persistent and tender, so that she who gave the most drew, in reality, the signal benefit.

One evening in the middle of November, Lucilla, upon entering her flat, saw that the box behind the door contained two or three letters. The chill habit of living the life of an anchorite alone was one of the matters which Honora in vain had combated. The room never had a welcome for the girl when she entered it; it was always necessary to warm and light it and to coax out some semblance of comfort by efforts of her own. But Lucilla pressed the sharpness of any deprivation voluntarily to her own heart; it made her think she was "simplifying" herself, paring away the luxurious habit created by a vicious civilization and getting nearer to a share in the life of the people.

On this occasion she took the letters from the box and threw them on a corner-table without looking at them, and then proceeded with the usual business of lighting the fire and preparing her meal. And at last the room was bright and the kettle steaming on the hob. Then she changed her dress, and finally sat down to tea. A touch of austerity in her treatment of herself held her off her letter-reading—or was it a prolongation of her pleasure? For to one whose days were thin and meagre and full of aching needs such communications with the outside world were the deepest satisfaction, the joy of them spreading not only over hours but over days. An envelope containing a few words even of friendly interest—how much it was! what thrills of life and colour it brought!

Not until every trace of her meal was cleared away and the room brightened up for the evening did the girl approach the table on which the real feast was spread.

That letter on the top was nothing special; she turned it over. Beneath lay a square greyish-coloured envelope, the very look of which was inviting and friendly, thick, too, as though a couple of sheets at least might be covered with handwriting, conveying news, thoughts, kindness, and perhaps a little rallying laughter. The writing on the envelope was Paul's. When she saw it her hand darted covetously out and covered it, a snatch of greed in the fingers, her hungry heart leaping as a half-starved thing at sight of a meal. The room was dizzy suddenly with life, with colour, with sound—a pleasant excitement beat in her ears and agitated her breast. To her lone corner of existence—so land-locked, so rock-bound—flowed again the greater tide, drawing in through tiny apertures its salt and tonic wave to refresh

"*The rifts where unregarded mosses be.*"

She raised the packet eagerly. Then her fingers suddenly relaxed and her eyes closed under a frown; she dropped the envelope as quickly as she had gathered it up and threw both hands over her face. For her will cried out to her "No! No! No!" A step back was precisely the step that she never would take. It was her resolve to close all avenues that opened from the past—her judgment of Paul Sheridan the Parliamentary member being unchanged. The tumult into which the sight of his handwriting had thrown her, with its agitating reminder of the happy by-gone days, was over as suddenly as it had come. She snatched the letter up a second time, turned towards the fire, and thrust it

consigned into the flame. When it was consumed she gave a sigh of relief as though she had escaped a danger.

Three weeks went by and it was now December; the month in its early opening was mild, but the weather prophets foretold the approach of excessive cold. Late one soft and pleasant evening, Lucilla came out of the shabby house in the street beyond Westminster Bridge, after a couple of hours spent in the society of the Anarchist companions. The occasion had been an ordinary one, and she was turning homewards without any special emotion either of interest or excitement. D'Auverney was with her. It had grown to be an unspoken custom between them that he should accompany her a part of the way home. She did not care that it should be so, but he was persistent, and in her aching loneliness she suffered his companionship. He was far older than herself; he was, she had reasons to believe, a married man, and his presence gave, on occasion at least, a comforting sense of protection. Usually he amused and interested her with talk; to-night he was silent. They had almost crossed the Bridge before he spoke. Then he suddenly bent down towards her.

"Miss Dennison," said he, in a low voice, "I have something important to communicate to you."

So fraught with significance was his tone that Lucilla stopped dead on the pavement.

"Not here," said he, hastily; "but can you spare me a moment? Will you come with me now and grant me an interview in some secluded spot?"

"Where?" said Lucilla, startled and awed by the immense gravity which he had thrown into his voice.

"I know a quiet spot on the Embankment beyond the Houses of Parliament. We can stand there leaning on the wall and looking over into the water. No one will molest us."

And d'Auverney, accepting her unspoken consent, took a step in advance and walked on quietly as though leading the way. Lucilla drew her long cloak more tightly about her and followed closely; her heart began to beat in subdued excitement. The two passed under the shadow of the House of Commons—that place so condemned in the judgment of either—and turned by the railings to the left. The jostling of passengers here sensibly diminished. But in the most thronged part Lucilla had been unconscious of it; she threaded her way amongst her fellows in a singular absorption, her heart fixed on that strange romance which it had accepted in preference to any other, and her senses closed to ordinary sights and sounds. The great pile of Westminster, the Bridge and river, the moving procession of the streets—all were tinctured by the same hue, all were beheld through the predominant mystification of Anarchism, felt through that, touched through that. No passing face but responded in some way to her exalted *entêté* condition, no trifling event but was in her excited fancy an omen summoning her to proceed.

"*Un voyage de mille lieues commence par un pas. Et tu sais, compagnon! Il n'y a que le premier pas qui coûte.*"

Those were words she had been reading that evening —dully, without inspiration, as it seemed to her now— but they returned to her memory illumined. Passing

under the shadow of the House of Lords, her eye flashed its scorn on the bricks and mortar, her tread became firmer, her spirit fiercer. She followed in magnificent assurance, and to the eye of her mind the fate before her trailed a purple and royal robe.

D'Auverney led on until they came to a part where the coming and going of men, comparatively speaking, ceased. On one side a wide road was a row of pleasant houses, on the other a wall, and beneath it the noiseless, beautiful flow of the river.

"Here!" said he, suddenly coming to a halt.

Then he leaned against the wall and turned his head to the river; Lucilla approached and stood near him. The tones of their voices could be caught by no one. The immense feeling of grave adventure, of great fate, intoxicated the girl, heart and brain, more deeply than before.

"Mademoiselle," said he, in a sudden, rough voice close to her ear, "are you staunch?"

"Surely, Monsieur d'Auverney, surely you do not distrust me?"

"Ah! would that be possible? No! I do not distrust you. If I had distrusted you, should I have brought you here?"

"I am staunch, Monsieur d'Auverney."

"But you are so slight a creature—so *mignon—petite*. Have you strength?"

"I am strong," said Lucilla, with conviction.

"But these are rough matters—too great, too grave, for shoulders so slight and graceful as yours. They are things for men alone."

"For women, too—if they touch life."

'But it is bitter—dangerous. Action is different from talk. It is pleasant to speak of action in the circle of the comrades—to pass the word, to dream. But to come out from them, mademoiselle, with the mind fixed on its lonely intention. To set oneself to do a deed for liberty—for the people!"

"Ah, Monsieur d'Auverney! Is it going to be as great as that?"

She clasped her hands with a swift, natural movement and her voice thrilled.

"Had you not better go away now without hearing the rest?" he pursued, in a voice partly mocking, partly tender. "For it is as great as that—*as great as that.*"

His dark eyes darted to hers and held them; a soft, subdued shadow made the splendid irises more beautiful; Lucilla's eyes, wide open, clear as stars, stared into them.

"Come!" said he, still with that deep, dark gaze; "I warn you—you had *better not listen.*"

A slow immense movement of the heart in her breast answered to her prevision that the dream of the last few years of her life was about to be realized; the physical feeling rose upwards to her brain and there was a rushing sound in her ears. Her own frame seemed far too slight to sustain the idea which had made so sudden an inroad upon her and now seemed to possess her like some spirit that was not her own. She put out her hand to the wall to steady herself.

"Go on," said she, breathlessly.

"Come nearer. Turn to the river."

Lucilla obeyed. To her wild fancy the whisper close to her ear was coloured crimson and had an edge.

"It is not customary to us to confide in others—least of all to entrust our affairs to a woman. Our convictions are our guides, our acts are not deliberated—they are *performed*. Only strong souls can go with us."

"I know it."

"But when the occasion comes, when we see that the time is ripe for a far-reaching action—then, if help be needed, we greatly dare—throwing ourselves on our faith in the hearts of the companions."

"Yes."

"And now the time *is* ripe. We have to hasten, mademoiselle, because humanity can wait no longer. We [illegible]guish for want of a deed—an example. If we are to advance, a leap to the heart of things must be taken! I am weary that we should stand still so long and suffer the people to perish in battalions from the systematized oppression of officialism and greed. We are fainting because of corruption within our own ranks. The Socialists have deserted us; they have moved to the enemy's side and are cozening the people with official lies——"

Beneath her cloak, Lucilla's two hands tightly bound themselves upon her swelling heart.

"Even amidst our own immediate comrades there is deviation, fair speech, curtailment. A new departure is necessary—it has been prepared, it is ready. From the moment itself it takes its spring. If we are not to lose

sight of ourselves we must leap forward and plant our ruthless banner of the revolution in the citadel. A deed, mademoiselle, a deed is necessary!"

"Yes—yes—*what?*"

"Are you, then, one of—*us?*"

"I am. Oh, I am staunch!"

"Do you infer what is coming?"

"Scarcely. Go on."

"If you saw freedom, a renovated world behind, would you fear the momentary crash—the thunders of falling states?"

"No! No! It is what I desire."

"Can you bear it? Small, slight thing, can you endure?"

"I have told you to proceed."

The night was full of the swift dialogue: the air bore it off in reverberations, and the river carried it.

"Several great cities are in it—Poissy, Lyons, Lille, Marseilles, Madrid, Paris of course. *And London.*"

"Ah!"

The ground, the houses, the very air reeled.

"London is the heart of the movement. Here is its birthplace. From here the other great centres are moved."

Her lips opened, but without sound.

"You believe in the strength of the people, their irresistible might, once they are aroused?"

"Yes."

"If I tell you, the fates of your comrades—their life, their death—will be in your hands."

Lucilla's eyes closed. God knows what emotion seized

the poor little maidenly heart with its dreams, its cold purity, its fire-spot of passion—its wild capacity and hunger for self-devotion.

"*My* fate—*our* fates," added d'Auverney.

"They will be safe."

"But have you still more courage? Can you go a step further? Can you *act?*"

Was it, then, possible? She was called on to come forward? Her head drooped for a moment; the emotion she was under was almost intolerable.

"You require *my* assistance!"

"Yours, and no other's."

There was deep silence between them.

"You are the single woman," he whispered, as it was prolonged.

Still she did not reply.

Gazing across the river, she saw the dim piles of buildings and the lights and the long reflections, through a strange, luminous mist that hovered before her eyes. A hurried step went by. A hansom dashed past. The noise of the city hovered everywhere, and there were cries from the boats on the water. A strange, cold, mournful sense of finality, of eternal adieu, fell upon her; the earth gladness passed forever from her spirit. Her eyes were moistened for one moment. Suddenly she turned her pure, innocent face, stretched out her snow-flake hand and laid it in that of the foreigner without a word. His eyes leapt.

"You give yourself?"

"Yes. And I am glad."

But her voice was faint.

"Can you take a journey suddenly?"

Honora, the school—strange incongruities!—floated into her mind. They seemed as thin apparitions only. The ordinary duty to which she was pledged shrivelled as worthless tinder in a furnace.

"Yes," said she. "When must it be?"

"This is Sunday. I could make every preparation for Thursday night. It must be Thursday, and not later."

"I will be ready."

"If you require money——" he began.

She took a step backwards and shook her head.

"For the passage I meant," he said, hastily; "across the Channel, you comprehend."

"Monsieur d'Auverney! Not out of England!"

"Ah, mademoiselle! Not alone. No—no—not alone. With protection and companionship near you."

"I do not understand. Where am I going? And what for?"

D'Auverney pressed near until his breath was on her cheek. He paused as though to gather force, and then his voice broke from him in a stormy whisper, every syllable of which was tipped with long repressed passion.

"What for? Because you are the heart of me! Because you fit me as the dagger fits the sheath. Because you are my courage, my inspiration, my soul. Because I cannot act without you; without you, I cannot bring it through."

"I am not understanding," said Lucilla, sharply. She was bewildered, horrified, attracted in one breath. "All

this is as it may be. Speak more plainly. For I do not understand."

D'Auverney laughed softly. It was a beautiful musical laugh that seemed to pervade her. Looking at him, his face showed as a splendid thing luminous with smiles and with a strange new something that never in her life had she beheld before. Why—why—in the immense gravity of this moment, did Monsieur d'Auverney smile and look like that? Her delicate lids suddenly shut. In the dim light the soft, cold virginity that lay about the brows and lips, the high reserve, the cloistral something that set her all apart, seized on the man's heart and fired him to an emotion that was savage in its intensity; *that*, and the inexplicable freedom of her brave English manners, foredoomed to misreading by eyes that had for years perused a voluptuous page in a prim binding—a licentious print, stolen, as it were, between the rigid boards of a missal.

"Is it possible that you have not guessed—that you have not seen that I have chosen you, small, fragile, heroic girl, out of all women, to move with me to the great purpose? Ah! But, you have seen! You have known! Can you or I ever forget that evening when you came to me—voluntarily, mademoiselle, *unasked*:—when you condescended to yourself throw yourself upon my society, my tuition, my guidance? Then was it that I first felt the free beat of your exquisite heart near mine—knew that you had broken your bonds and were free:—that the long coveted thing was in reach. For do you not see——"

He came nearer her. Lucilla raised her hand with a

strange movement and brushed it across her eyes, as though some thin, confusing web hung there. The air around her was whirling with whispers and circles of light.

"For do you not see," he repeated, "that you are the heart of me—that with you the true inspiration began? In your charming impulsiveness you won me—but I was yours before. You rule me, mademoiselle; I am a child to your slightest touch. I have envied the cloak that enfolded you, the wind that lifted your hair and brought the colour to your cheek. Ah, that cheek! That lovely mouth——"

"Monsieur d'Auverney!"

"No! No! Do not speak yet. Your mouth was created to be gazed at—worshipped—touched. It is there, mademoiselle, to fill a man's veins with fire and nerve him to his task. Without you I am nothing. With you in my arms I can dare—defy—act. Not I alone—four great cities await your consent. All those threads on which mighty destinies depend converge to a single point that lies in your hand—your hand so small, so fine, so delicate, yet so strong. For till you bid me move I will not move; till you give yourself to me I shall be nothing; till your lovely mouth surrenders itself I am incapable. My arms ache for you, my nature craves you. See! I give you my heart, my hands, my worship, my all!"

Good God! was this—*this* the meaning of the moment?—this *outrage!* From that fair height was the descent so swift, so deep? For the first time in her life, in the very moment of her high exaltation of feel-

ing, Lucilla was reduced to the merest sense of Sex, condemned to listen to a bare solicitation of a kind hitherto unshaped to her imagining.

"Stop!"—the voice struggled as through some physical obstruction.

He had thrown himself towards her, and she had retreated a step. Her action, her cry, shook out of him a new storm of words. In the whirl of his whispers and the extremity of her repulsion, it was only by a supreme effort that she kept her balance sufficiently to understand that each sentence of passion was pointed by a hint of some ominously rash adventure to follow upon this stormy scene. But as regards herself, the prose of the situation stole with intolerable clearness upon her cooling fancy:—she was in the eyes of this man no Maid of France selected to bear forwards the banner of revolt, but simply an intoxicating draught to his own lips, the froth to his courage, the stimulating bite before action. *That* was her part, and this the proposition to which the prelude had been played in so sounding a key. Dwindled to such dimensions, she saw herself suddenly from the shameful eyes of another.

"Wait!" she cried again.

Her voice was thin, weak, inadequate. That immense emotion which had brought her into the situation, and which had lent its elation to her courage even to the point of self-betrayal, was extinguished. Of all the fever and strain, the aspiration, and wild expectation and romance, nothing was left; it had burnt out like a coloured fire-ball, leaving her suddenly cold, small, sane. But once her foot on solid earth again, her keen brain began

to trace its way amid the ruin of things, to sort, to test, to determine its own attitude, and to take up its own plan with a cold, mournful realization of the safety of limitation. In a world whose fruition turned to ashes at her disastrous touch, it was still possible to throw oneself back upon the eternal sense of justice, to retreat within the hidden fortress of the spiritual, and entrench one's own petty failure behind that enshrouding greatness. She told herself with sharp self-flagellating truth that—in justice—she could not blame this man; he stood for his principle, and no point of his action but was logically derived from it. For the rest, her nearest and main refuge was her English training, the orderliness and just balance of her daily habit; she felt it return to her from the remotest reach of her being, rising up within her and asserting itself to the utter and complete extinction of all other feeling. The night partook of the change. This was a road she stood upon, those were houses of brick and mortar, that a sluggish not overclean river, and she once more herself.

"I ask you to wait!" Her foot stamped imperiously on the pavement.

D'Auverney folded his arms and bent his head.

"It is well," she said, drily, "to put things of this kind clearly. This is a personal bargain, I perceive. Am I to understand that you are asking me to accompany you on a journey out of England—immediately? That I am to go with you on Thursday to Paris?"

"And with my love."

"You ask me to accompany you. In what capacity?"

"As my well-beloved, my most cherished."

"As your wife—or what?"

"If thus you name it."

"And what becomes," cried Lucilla, with sudden in spiration, "of your *real* wife? Of the present Madam d'Auverney?"

D'Auverney unfolded his arms and looked at her i quiet surprise.

"What has that to do with the question?" said he "Who told you that I have a wife?"

"I know it," said Lucilla, briefly.

"Just so," he replied, calmly; "all is clear betwee us."

There was a long silence. No words could have stung deeper—and the venom was that they were true. The situation was to him—not her. As for d'Auverney, he was too versed in conquest to be either impatient or to doubt the issue. He simply waited until she should thrill him again by voluntarily laying her pretty hand in his. The piquant thing about it from the beginning had been the impulsive, charming tenders that Lucilla herself had made—those free-taking manners of hers which, if common to English women, must make courtship, indeed, a pleasant thing to English gentlemen. He devoured her face and figure with his eyes, and awaited the intense pleasure of her genial compliance.

Meanwhile, Lucilla's wit travelled quick ways of its own. The shock was too intense not to prove stimulating, and the swift self-flagellation it brought with it once more steadied her on justice. There was a certain measure of hard, simple sense in d'Auverney's last words, and the heart of pride within her frightful hu-

miliation rooted itself on that. She moistened her dry lips.

"If all is clear between you and me," said she, slowly, "it is—probably—hardly clear between yourself and your wife."

"I trust, mademoiselle," said d'Auverney, quickly, "that you will not permit an affair long dead to prejudice my present suit."

Her ears shrank; was she so cheap a thing as that? The hard, self-flagellating instinct kept her sane and to her point.

"Your *wife*," she repeated—"a woman to whom you gave a pledge."

"When I met Madame d'Auverney," said the Frenchman, "I had not met you. Love cannot be bound. You hesitate over a trifle. It does credit to your fineness of heart. There is a legal tie between myself and a woman to whom I am indifferent. I do not recognise the Law. My affection being dead, the tie is over. It is nothing."

"You mistake," returned Lucilla. "*I* recognise the tie. In all probability, your wife does too."

"Mademoiselle," said d'Auverney, speaking with an accent of obvious sincerity, "what is that woman to me that I should consider her? Love that is dead *is* dead. You cannot revive a corpse. And is *your* conscience so far legalized that you suppose the *law* of this matter could be binding on me for one second?"

Lucilla paused again. There had even been surprise in his tone. She noted it and understood. Again she pressed the point against herself. Justice, hard, cold, salutary, should be meted out. He was simply true to

his principles; he was saying nothing but what had been included in his teaching from the beginning. There was not a word that was not logical and writ down in the premiss. She had of her own voluntary act, by accepting his dogma, cut from herself all standpoint from which she could logically upbraid, despise, or revile him. The whole thing was astoundingly clear to her mind now; and yet the difference between the coloured obfuscation of yesterday and the intolerable light of this moment was, that *then* the talk had been general and in the air; *now* it was a personal application.

"It is not the legal tie of which I think," said Lucilla, in the same thin, quiet voice; "but have you no feeling of doubt when you consider what your wife, your deserted wife, may suffer? No feeling of honour to a pledge given?"

"I am not one," he said, with a kind of cold glow in his eyes, "to potter with doubts and mess with honour. Honour! Is *your* conscience enslaved to such a conventional bit of humbug? I thank my Maker I carry within me no such sickly admonisher. My conscience is my will to preserve myself in life and joy and action."

"Monsieur d'Auverney," said Lucilla, "we must end this conversation. There has been some terrible misunderstanding. It is not you I blame; it is myself. My conscience is so bound by that conventional bit of humbug that I am not even able to thank you for your offer."

The bitterness of her humiliation escaped her in those words. She turned to go. Only, however, to find herself confronted once more by the same storm of passion,

by that face luminous with an emotion that offended and sickened her, and by the added sense of fear which a new note of savagery in the man's voice brought with it.

"You are not going, mademoiselle," said he, threateningly; "assuredly we have not explained ourselves. We are comrades, mademoiselle—not children playing at love. You placed your hand in mine. You were under a vow. *This* is but a prelude to the great event."

"The vow of secrecy I made I will keep. God help me! I am a weak woman. I have come to a great stress, Monsieur d'Auverney! Your aspect, your manner, terrify and disgust me."

That was the horrible part of it. The gentle, courteous companion was transformed to some incalculable mischief, to an unruled, unguided force that flung itself upon her. There he stood before her, an incarnate impulse that acknowledged no law save itself, that was its own God, its own religion. She felt without hearing them his whirling words; they rained upon her as shapeless, inarticulate sounds; she only knew that they stained and broke and defiled her, that an extremity of humiliation was meted out to her, and that all the habitual reticences of her mind and nature—the walled garden and sanctuary of her soul—was trampled down as with the hoofs of some coarse satyr. It was in her mind to shriek for help against this horror—this horror always rimmed by his ghastly claim upon her; but when she assayed it her throat and tongue were powerless. There are words that are brutal as blows, tones that are insults, looks that are indignities. And always, and always that ghastly claim, that hint of her vol-

untary surrender. She made a rush past him. He laid his hand upon her. His touch was loathsome to her sense as a reptile's; her heart seemed to swoon within her when she felt it; the repulsion in her feeling was something physically overpowering; she felt herself swaying; there was a great black horror, and the detested handsome, luminous face following her down into it. The words that escaped her lips in a sobbing moan broke from her unconsciously.

"Oh, Paul!" she cried; "oh, Paul! Won't you save me?"

"That perjured traitor! That betrayer of the cause! You call to *him*?"

The bitter venom and hate of the tones penetrated to her ear from some far place and stung her back to life. They seemed to snatch her suddenly out of her careful self-restraint and throw her into some unknown, unexperienced region of emotion. Her feet, her veins became fire; she did not feel her body: it was gone. She was a single wild force of inspired and supreme fury, a mere piece of hot and instant vengeance. She wrenched herself free. A voice poignant, ringing—scarcely her own—rushed from her—

"*It is you who betray!*"

And darting forwards with a sharp upward spring and with her fist clenched, she struck—slight, small thing that she was—no inconsiderable blow at the detested face.

The next moment she was flying with blinding speed in the direction of the safe and noisy turmoil of the streets.

CHAPTER XXI.

LIKE a pierced air-ball, Lucilla's illusion had collapsed. All night she lay with wide-open eyes and motionless body, while wave after wave of shame and agony passed over her. An excessive wound had been dealt to her sensitiveness. Only when all the written or unspoken social rules that had erected an invisible fortress around her, within which her delicate girlhood had moved and acted, brave and free as a lad is—only when these were destroyed did she realize their existence, and her defencelessness without them against the brutal tyranny of individualistic lawlessness. Hitherto Sex had meant to her simply one of the conditions and modalities of daily existence; she had been scarcely conscious of it. Its meaning was now discovered to her, not through some glorious passion revealing her possession of so sweet and dignified an attribute, but through the cruelest humiliation. Every now and then a sigh of anguish escaped her: she was faint and giddy under the blow.

"I am killed," she said, "I am killed. I can never recover it—never look with the same eyes again."

And at the same time her judgment repeated that this which had happened, had been wrapped in the premiss from the first. Beautiful possibility, recondite loveliness, exquisite aspiration, might be there too:—but, then, so was this also, this lawless permission of tyrannous outrage by one individual will on another.

When morning came after the sleepless darkness, her

mind was able to stir a little under its weight of humiliation. The pane of her window, from which the curtain was drawn back, showed a grey bit of sky, from which a mingled shower of sleet and rain fell on the roofs and chimneys. The temperature of the air had sunk suddenly, and it was as piercingly raw and cold this morning as it had been close and warm last night. Lucilla dragged herself out of bed and began her dressing operations. Half-way through them she lit her fire. The growing warmth of the room and her own movements acted as a stimulus, and suddenly her memory took up the thread of last night's event at that constant hint of d'Auverney's of some conspiracy abrewing; and then she recalled the promise of secrecy she had given.

Lucilla dropped her brush upon her knee and sat very still, a frown upon her brow. How was she to know that this contemplated action—which she had pictured as a great simultaneous rising of the people in the cities named—was a popular bid for liberty at all, and not a mere individual outrage such as her sharp lesson of the night before had taught her was possible? Ought she to keep that vow which she had made, or ought she to break it and inform? The doubt and the question were alike frightful and far beyond her present mental capacity to resolve. She threw herself back in her chair and, closing her eyes, tried to find her way out of the shocking trap into which she had stepped. The thought of Paul brought her a momentary hope which was as instantly erased. It was impossible to write to Paul—or any other man; she had lost her bearings in

life and could not find the old unconscious freedom of her former attitude. The change was in herself now. Tears of anguish—slow, scarce drops—stole down her cheeks

"I cannot write. I am broken," she whispered.

Her next move was to spring from her chair and hurry on her dressing. If she was to keep her sanity she must escape from these overwhelming thoughts into some cheerful human society. Honora's comfortable presence was the single refuge open to her, and to that she fled.

The hour was so extremely early that Lucilla reached the school before her friend had sat down to breakfast. Honora was moving about her bright and cheerful room, opening letters and putting little things to rights, when Lucilla suddenly slipped in at the door.

"Why, you strange, quiet, sweet, little mouse!" cried Honora, whom instinct led to be lavish of tender epithets to Lucilla; "how did you get here?"

"I just came," said Lucilla, fighting for a smile.

"Have you had breakfast?"

Lucilla started and faintly coloured.

"No—when I come to think of it, I haven't. Honestly, I forgot."

"H'm!" said Honora, stamping her foot; "let me feel your hands. Down you sit by the fire at once. I am going to take off your boots. Bit of a thing! You are trembling. Come! nestle up. Was there ever such a piece of arrant foolery? Let me see your eyes."

"Not my eyes, Honora, dear."

"Probably you have been shedding tears over the

woes of the East End and starving yourself by way of setting the balance straight. If I could only induce you to leave the world's misery to stronger shoulders than your own—Mr. Sheridan's, for instance—and to stick to your own morsel of duty. Not that I would forbid you to help Mr. Sheridan in a reasonable measure. But do remember you are a woman."

"Yes," said Lucilla, in a low voice; "that is the ghastly part of it."

"Ghastly? Fiddlesticks! It is one of those facts that has to be looked well in the face and then forgotten. Mr. Sheridan's heart is no doubt a deep and kind one—though I consider him on the whole detestable—and I've every reason for supposing he feels the world's misery as much as you do. But men's nerves don't lie on the surface; they carry the burden of life lightly and throw off impressions more easily. The very fact that they don't cry when they are tired or when anyone speaks roughly to them marks a permanent difference. When things go cross with them *they* play billiards and smoke—and score anyhow. Now, *we* creep away and sob."

Honora was stooping on one knee by Lucilla's side. She had Lucilla's foot on the other knee and was unlacing the boot. Lucilla stole a long, covetous look at the bent head with its rippling dark hair. If only she had not repressed her yearning to lay bare to Honora's quizzical eyes and temperate nature her own confused story! But her mind had been too long off the balance to permit her to lay hold of commonsense now and to drop her personal perplexity into the genial stream of indifferent events.

"Now, there's all this bother about emancipation," continued Honora. "I went in for that once, you know. And of course I'm all for clearing away our 'disabilities' now—including stays and tears, if it can be compassed. But the fact is, Lucilla, I discovered, the very moment I had found a work that suited me and set to doing it, that I *was* emancipated. Now, *you* taught me that bit of wisdom. You instructed me in the effectiveness of revolving in one's own circle constantly instead of taking a meteoric course."

"Yes," said Lucilla.

"There, the boots are off at last," said Honora, rising. "I don't know how it is, Lucilla, but the sight of you stirs within me the prevision that I am a born mother—a caterer for a tableful of hungry naughty children, with my mind on jams and consolation. I am glad you are small. It makes it more dignified and fitting that I should kiss you, *thus*, squeeze you in my arms *this way* —as though you were a child. You *are* a child, Lucilla! I never saw such inveterate babyhood on any other face —such a singular and inconvenient and abject innocence of contour."

"Oh! I know everything—*now!*"

She lifted up her face with her scared eyes wide open; again it was on the tip of her tongue to make wise confession.

"Do you, indeed? *Everything*, I should imagine. Bonnie face! Exquisite little mortal! I feel something between a clumsy giantess and a wise matriarch beside you. I don't know what that word means and believe I invented it. Otherwise it is historical, perhaps—Leslie

says I am weak in history. What I mean by it is t
feel—don't you know—at the bottom of your he
every time you realize the helplessness of a grown m
to achieve his own salvation—in details, a sort of excr
ciated pity that so cumbrous an animal should be
constantly inadequate. I believe we knew we we
mothers before men knew they were men. It's th
which makes it inevitable that we should love the
Well! I have very much the same sort of feeling t
wards you and your superior character and intellect."

Honora was moving about now and looking after t
breakfast.

"Coffee shall it be, Lucilla? I mean to make it m
self. Also hot toast. Muffins and more substanti
viands arrive from below. Thin little hand! I belie
you are one of those women who expect to obtain great
refinement and clearness of thought by the simple pr
cess of starvation. If women would but realize th
nourishing food is the basis of right thinking, I belie
they would rescue themselves from absurdity."

"Am I absurd, Honora?"

"Chronically so, my sweetest Lucilla."

"Honora!"

"Yes?"

"Is it my turn to take the English citizen class th
week?"

"Certainly it is, my clever mite. Have you anythin
ready?"

"I thought I would speak to them upon the genera
ising faculty. Have you observed a curious thing abou
women?"

"Only too many, my dear. But we are in a conspiracy to paint the Sex as perfection, and to reserve our reviling for individual members."

"I have no one to revile saving myself. I am sad, Honora. I want to tell the children, through some simple lesson, that women have two chief things to conquer in life. One is the brain inertia that prevents them from ever making a generalization at all; the other is the want of control—of staying power—that impels them, if ever they do achieve a generalization, to fling themselves headlong after it into some precipitate and fatal action."

Honora's gaiety of manner concealed some very serious anxiety on Lucilla's account. She persuaded her friend to remain with her for the four following nights—longer than that Lucilla would not assent to. Then Honora extracted a promise that before she went back to her flat she would send the key to a neighbour, and at least have the room prepared and warmed for her return. Lucilla consented. Friday morning, which was to see her termination of the week's school work, stood out to her imagination shrouded in vague surmise. D'Auverney would have reached Paris by then. A cloud of dismay and anxiety hung over her mind; she would rather get back to her flat and meet the event alone. Meanwhile, she concealed her feeling of illness and mental disturbance as well as she could from her friend, and combated nervous attacks of terror by assiduous application to work. Honora took in a morning paper, but rarely herself perused it. The sight of it on the table at breakfast would steal from Lucilla the possi-

bility of swallowing her food; and after breakfast she opened it with dread. Friday morning arrived.

"Here is the paper," said Honora, pushing it towards her; "I never have time to read it. The Government will, I daresay, look after the country, if I look after my school."

Lucilla opened it. There seemed nothing special in the foreign intelligence, upon which her eye had instantly pounced. She was turning the other pages listlessly, when her attention was caught by a heading that instantly riveted it.

* * * * * * * *

The evening before, that is, on the Thursday, Sheridan, in company with Lyttleton, had attended in the Public Gallery a sitting of the School Board. It was dark when they came out, and first crossing to the river side of the Embankment, they turned their faces in the direction of Westminster. Both of them noticed that under the arch near the offices of the Thames Conservancy the figure of a man was leaning. Neither of them remarked, seeing they were walking in an opposite direction, that he moved from his position as they approached, and, crossing the road in the direction from which they came, kept pace with them upon the other side. If they had happened to observe these movements, neither would have attached meaning or importance to them; they walked along in the negligent security habitual to persons who belong to a—comparatively speaking—well-ordered city. It had been snowing for a couple of days, but for the moment the sky was clear and beautiful above the white-clad trees and houses; they chose the

river side because of the quiet beauty of the scene, and continued their walk along the Embankment for the same reason. The cold of the atmosphere was sensibly diminishing, and a thaw was imminent. At present, however, it was calm and beautiful enough to tempt them to stop and stand by the wall and look over the river, and draw once more to their citizen hearts the never-wearying feel of the Great City as the Thames and its embankments carry it. Sheridan in particular was saturated with the emotion of London; in the daytime this emotion was done into the prose of his continuous labours for the city of his birth and love. In the evening, in rare moments, at such an hour as this, when she hung her lights above and around the river, and shrouded her pinnacles and towers in a mystery and beauty that was something over and above their own—in such a moment it affected him from that region of Ideality and Poetry which were strongly hidden in his imagination, but which left a mark conspicuously in his eyes and on his brows. It escaped him now in a sense of the vastness and quietness of this central scene of a city not yet asleep beneath the night; and then of the vastness and quietness of unseen things above and beyond the turmoil of our best endeavour, of the grand indifferent persistence that draws us on when we ourselves think that we are pulling. A sigh escaped him.

"I must hold to my own," thought he, as he felt that greater reach upon him, "to that little which I am able to see."

There had run through the dim places of his imagination a faint shudder, a whisper of doubt. It was not

superstition, it was the profound surmise of a strong intellect that the arrayed forces contain an incalculable remainder; the tribute of a powerful mind to its own fallibility, and of a splendid will to the small, quiet something which is mightier than itself. In such moments the character of Sheridan's face changed. It became the face of a virile man subduing himself to the strong correction of that impenetrable greatness which warns us of the subordination and smallness of ourselves.

"It will all be spoiled to-morrow," said Lyttleton, looking round him after the silence; "but it is perfect to-night."

The two walked on—the dogging figure unobserved upon the other side—until Westminster Bridge was reached; here they crossed again and struck northwards.

"Let us go by Parliament Street and the Park," said Sheridan; "there is plenty of time, and it will be quieter."

Their destination was Spring Gardens; Sheridan had an appointment at the offices of the County Council and was proposing afterwards to spend the evening in the society of an ex-cabinet minister, who wished to take his opinion upon a subject of which he was known to have a deeper acquaintance and more originality of thought than most men. As they walked on Sheridan suddenly took back a joyous militant bearing and broke out into his habitual raillery at the Liberal party.

"I'm sick at them," said he; "they haven't it in them, so far as I can make out, to muster a Programme. They are looking about for an election cry in the Stars with this misery-infested city lying at their feet. In effect

they acknowledge that they can't think of anything to come before the country with save Home Rule, Welsh Disestablishment, and Liquor. One would think we had cleared everything up and were forced into imbecility for want of a job. Hardhead asked me to call to-night and have a talk on the Rates question; I'm willing enough, but I mean to put in a word or two about the Programme by the way. They've got to accept mine if they can't think of one of their own. But what are we to make of a set of men who stand for office and have to seek for their working ideas outside—anywhere where there's a brain furnished enough to look about it? I'm sick at the thing. First they grope about for a Programme. Then when someone outside has sketched one which has a little more to do with the interests of the majority of the voters than the behaviour of the moon, and when they've got elected into power on a genuine cry—Payment of members and things of the kind which touch the heart of the question—then to a dead certainty they'll drop it. On they'll go pottering at something off the mark, instead of promptly setting right half a dozen abuses that lie at the root of London's misery, and which it is their privilege to be able to remedy from the different departments by so many strokes of the pen without applying to Parliament at all."

They had turned into Parliament Street and were nearing the Park. Here it was lonely and still; no one was in the street that they could see save that moving figure on the other side of the road. Just then the man crossed over a little before them. In the heat of conversation they hardly noticed him. Sheridan was on the

inside of the path. They were close on the man's heels now. Suddenly he turned round and made as though he had changed his mind and was in a violent hurry to return. He pushed rudely against Sheridan. And at that moment the latter felt Lyttleton throw the whole of his weight violently upon him so as to propel him to the right; in the same instant a stinging, burning pain in his left side forced from him a sharp scream, and he stumbled forwards, fainting, on to the snow.

"My God!" cried Lyttleton. "I saw the knife in the man's hand. After him some of you fellows! He ran towards the Park. A big man with a bushy beard."

The road had appeared to be empty; it was full now of hurrying people. Lyttleton was on his knees in the snow by Paul's side and was gently endeavouring to turn him over. Someone lent him a hand. The sight sickened him. The knife was still in the wound; round the blade, near the haft, was a piece of paper with an inscription upon it, rendered illegible by the flow of blood.

"I don't think he's badly hurt," said a quiet voice near him; "I'm not a doctor, but I know a little of these matters. I'll help you to lift him. The blow fell short of the mark somehow. But it was a near squeak, too."

"I saw the man," reiterated Lyttleton. "And I saw him raise the knife. There wasn't time to do anything but throw my friend forwards."

"Just so. You saved him. Or so I believe."

The next few hours were a nightmare of misery to Lyttleton. In addition to the uncertainty about his friend was the sordid horror of the police enquiry.

Lyttleton could throw no light upon the matter. He could only repeat the story of the man's sudden movement to return, of Sheridan's absorption in his talk, of the extraordinary swiftness of the blow, and of his own impulse to divert the stroke from a vital part by thrusting his friend to the side. With the man himself he had no acquaintance. He was a complete stranger, dark, and wearing a bushy beard. To the motive of the deed he was absolutely without a clue.

It was not until Saturday evening that Lyttleton was admitted to Paul's sick-room. The verdict of the doctors had been, however, favourable from the first; the wound though painful was not dangerous, the shock being probably the worst part of the matter. That was the reason of their keeping the patient in strict seclusion. The assault had taken place on Thursday night; on the Saturday morning Sheridan was sufficiently recovered to be able to reply to a few enquiries of the police, who were still vainly searching for the assassin. On the Saturday evening at his urgent request Lyttleton was admitted to his room. Lyttleton found him lying in bed, white from loss of blood and weak, though in no kind of danger.

"Are you pretty comfortable, old fellow?" asked he, tenderly.

"Pretty fair. It bites a bit, of course. But I don't know exactly why I'm lying here, except that the doctors will have it so. I'm forbidden to talk or to read, or to think, I believe, for the present. I'm to do nothing but lie and heal up."

"It won't be long."

"So they tell me. It's a mere trifle."

"Just a little patience required, I expect. They'll let me come in and sit with you now and then, I fancy."

"Yes, thanks. Did you see that paper?"

"What paper?" Lyttleton looked a little startled.

"The paper through which the knife was thrust. The police called for evidence about it this morning. I had to see them."

"Well?"

"You see, they have deciphered it. They showed it to me. The inscription was: 'To the Traitor.' Lyttleton! to whom have I been a traitor?"

"Lord knows, old fellow, *I* don't. Nor, I expect, does anyone who is in full possession of his senses."

A slight smile hovered over Sheridan's lips.

"Well," he said, "my own opinion is that our friend is an uncommonly acute fellow and knew particularly well what he was about. He—*they*—have no bigger fish than I am in England. The Chief Commissioner of Police," he added, still with half-veiled amusement, "is not in it with me."

"You have a clue, then, Sheridan!"

"You see," pursued the latter, calmly, "when a fellow sticks a knife into you, you naturally look up to enquire before going under. I did so. And I saw the man's eyes plainly above the false beard."

"And recognised him!"

"I don't know if I must say as much as that. But was safe out of England you may be certain before it was well enough to be questioned."

Lyttleton considered a little.

"And will never come back again, I believe," said he, after a pause. "I think I follow you now. But he *is* caught—on another count. It appears he went to Paris. He went there on business—of a sort. And he was prompt at it, too. The Chamber of Deputies or something on a great scale is supposed to have been his object. Unfortunately, what he carried about him had to be disposed of hastily before the time. Or he lost his nerve, or something went wrong. And he threw his bomb too soon."

"Anyone hurt?"

"A nursemaid carrying a baby. So much of the Bourgeoisie as may have been comprehended in a single infant in arms has, I am afraid, perished. A few windows have been broken in addition. And the police caught their man."

"I am sorry to hear this. Poor d'Auverney! The man did not understand the meaning of the idea at the back of his own mind. That was why it wrecked him. I believe I can follow it better than he did. I believe I see the reach of it ever so much clearer than he. I have never denied the fineness in it:—the idea of the Anarchist is a right sort of leaven; it is when it gets into the wrong hands that it becomes damnable and absurd. I hate to hear of a man experiencing defeat like this. D'Auverney was sincere enough in all conscience. And besides, when he struck at me he showed himself sagacious. I can forgive a man much on that count. I stand as the biggest foe of Anarchism in England—*because I understand it.* D'Auverney is perspicacious at least; a lesser man would have struck at the Home Secre-

tary or Chief Commissioner of Police." Paul lay silent for a moment. Then he added, in a gentle voice, "I think you and I need not add our little bit of information to the sum of things against the poor fellow. Honestly, I had not put two and two together when the police called this morning. We'll just lie low, shall we? And so the thing was in to-day's paper?"

"Just so."

Paul lay silent. Presently he turned his head wearily to the wall; it was the only movement permitted him at present. Lyttleton was excruciated to detect the signs of agitation in his face. He touched his hand kindly.

"I won't stay now," said he, tenderly; "you'd better be quiet. When you've picked up a little more I'll come and act as amanuensis and that kind of thing."

Paul suddenly opened his eyes.

"I've a message to send," said he; "it isn't at all urgent, but I should like to give it while I remember."

"All right. What is it?"

"When shall you call at Miss Kemball's?"

"To-morrow, probably. I usually go there on Sundays. Can I do anything for you?"

"If you should see Lucilla——"

"Lucilla is not there on Sunday. She would be on Monday if I went then."

"Monday will do. If you should see her, tell her—*from me*—that I'm all right—scarcely hurt a bit. Say that it is a trifle, and that I shall soon be well and about again."

"Very well. I shall not forget. I will call at the school on Monday."

"Thanks; that will do. Is it a cold night?"

"Horrible! All yesterday it thawed, and to-day is a black and miserable frost."

CHAPTER XXII.

On the Friday afternoon of the day on which an account of the assault on Sheridan had appeared in the paper, Lucilla returned to her flat. All morning, by a stupendous act of will, she had attended to her duties and retained a show of composure, her hope being that by so doing she might escape Honora's tender vigilance, and get back unquestioned to the lonely place where she could best fight her agonizing thoughts. And so well had she succeeded in her efforts that even Honora was deceived, and permitted her departure for the week end with rather less anxiety and reluctance than was usual. It was shocking weather. A thaw had set in after three days' snow, and it was accompanied by rain and every raw chill evil of the atmosphere. Lucilla, whose feeling of exhaustion in both mind and body had been steadily increasing, was drenched before she reached her destination: her cloak and skirts were dripping and her feet wet. As she painfully toiled up the stairs to her flat, a woman to whom, on Honora's insistence, she had confided the office of preparing and warming her room, came out and returned her the key, and enquired if any further services were needed. Lucilla, her mind preoccupied by her supreme need to conceal her misery, shook her-

self into an ordinary manner, summoned a smile to her face, and, forgetful that her flat was entirely unfurnished with food, paid the woman off on the spot, and assured her that she should require no further attention for days to come.

Then she continued her slow progress to the topmost story in the building, and having entered her rooms, closed and locked the door behind her.

A fire blazed on the hearth. The girl had scarcely force left to unhook her cloak and let it fall from her shoulders; that accomplished, she dropped wearily to the floor, leaning her head back against the wall in an attitude of complete exhaustion. She was deadly white, her eyes were closed, her features drawn, and her hands, palms upwards, lay listlessly by her side. Effort was, indeed, finally extinguished in that of passive suffering; she was as incapable of thinking as of movement; wave after wave of formless misery passed over her; she knew what had happened without being able to set the event in a single articulated phrase. How long she lay in this condition of collapse she did not know; when she came to something like consciousness again, she found that the fire was a dim glow in the grate and that dusk was gathering. Her feet and limbs were cold and numb, and a feeling of deadly weakness almost precluded the idea of freeing herself from the wet boots and skirts that still encumbered her. As to her misery, all she recalled of it was that thinking had proved a task beyond her, that for hours she must have lain there without making one inch of progress in the solution of some sickening mental problem. A dim urgent feeling that the problem

was still there was effectual to arouse her. She dragged herself to her feet and noted, with a faint sense of surprise, that her body was full of severe pain. The sharpness of it made it a stupendous effort to get across the room and to place more fuel on the fire and rekindle it to a blaze, but the extreme cold she experienced compelled her at least to this endeavour. The kettle was, she believed, full of water, but then she remembered there was no food in the flat, and that she had forbidden the woman to call and look after her, and that finally she had locked herself in. The question of food did not, however, disturb her, for the very idea of it was nauseating. She lit a couple of candles and then painfully freed herself from her wet garments. Sinking down in a low chair after the effort, she thrust her bare feet to the blaze and tried in this way to bring back feeling into them. By and bye the greater degree of physical comfort sent the frozen blood a little quicker through her veins; and into the confused miserable mental blackness a clear thought penetrated.

"Ah!" she said; "it is Paul who is hurt—Paul! who was trying to do his duty to men. It is Paul I am thinking about—that is what this weight on my brain means. There is something I have to say to him."

She rose from her seat and reached her blotting-case and a pencil from the bureau; but no sooner had she sunk back on the chair than the blankness seemed to return to her mind; she held the pencil suspended but found herself unable to trace a word; she recalled what her intention had been, but there was scarcely anything beyond that. Then she got up again, placed the paper

and pencil on a little stand by the side of the bed and the two candles with it; after that she piled more fuel on the fire, and then—panting for breath, fighting for each new effort, weeping from sheer pain—she finished her undressing.

"If I can only get into bed," she thought, "and lie still and get warm, my mind will come back to me. There is something about Paul—something that I have to remember and say to him."

At last the agonizing efforts were over and she was lying down in the warm light of fire and candle:—only, however, to sink again to the condition of semi-collapse.

It may be that eventually she slept; at least she passed into a land of nightmare and distracting visions. From this in the early hours of the morning she waked in indescribable misery. Not only was the weight on her spirits, the sense of intolerable and crushing anguish, heavier than before, but her head and limbs were tortured with increased pain.

Whereupon she knew that she was ill—ill here in the workman's flat on a Saturday morning and with every chance of assistance carefully excluded by her own hand.

"At least I shall be undisturbed," said she.

Her lips were parched and body cold. The fire and the candles had long burnt out, and though the means of rekindling both and of procuring water for herself lay to her hand, it was impossible even to raise her head from the pillow.

She fell again into a troubled, half-delirious doze which was all mingled with the confused misery of the day before. That misery touched Paul, it was intimately

connected with the idea of him; but then, what was it? Every thought reached and strove after him and failed always at the solution—as though a hand wiped it from her brain.

"Oh my friend! my friend!" was all her moaning thought and nothing further.

After that came a deep sleep and with it an appalling dream. It was not earth any longer, but some spiritual region where Judgment reigned. And Paul was there; she dreamed that he was an apostate, and that he was condemned by the spirits of the just;—she dreamed that it was she herself who pointed the first finger of accusation at him. And in her dream she thought that by the act she won high heaven for herself; and that heaven thus won was more horrible than the lowest hell.

The horror waked her. She found the daylight in her room and knew that it must be far into Saturday morning. The weather had cleared and it promised to be bright. But the light hurt her and the things on which her eyes rested were terrible, though she recognised in them the ordinary furniture of her chamber and strove to reason herself into tranquillity.

One object seriously alarmed and perplexed her. Beyond her, somewhere between the bed and the wall, rising from and surrounded by a nebulous mist, she saw the profile of Sheridan. It was clear and distinct in outline and colouring, but was cold and enigmatical as a Sphinx. It had been less terrible if it had turned and looked at her; but it gazed immovably at vacancy. This strange illusion terrified her spirit, and she turned her head on the pillow and closed her lids.

"My brain is disordered," she thought; "this is illness—no more. If I shut my eyes for a long time, what I see will vanish."

She kept them closed, while her heart thumped and tumbled in her breast; then after an intolerable interval she opened them timidly and anxiously.

The profile was still there.

Her alarm and uneasiness acted as a stimulus to her brain; she remembered the intended letter and her own extreme anxiety to write it. By a supreme effort she got her hand out of bed, stretched it to the stand by her side, and secured both paper and pencil. Then knowing nothing clearly of the subject of her proposed missive, she traced slowly and painfully the words:—

"DEAR PAUL

"Forgive——"

There were other ineffectual tracings, but the paper and the pencil dropped from her hands, and even the memory of her confused intention was effaced.

Her thought wandered to Honora. What would she not have given to have heard her step upon the stair, to have seen her strong, kind face at the door, the brown eyes full of love—what would she not have given to be touched by her hands! Her mind dwelt upon the memory of Honora, until the contrast heightened the present desolation to too intolerable an anguish, and she sought refuge from it in the more familiar grief and discomfort. She had been lying with her head averted; she turned it and sought again timidly for the strange illusion which embodied, as she knew, some tremendous but inexplicable grief. It was still there, immovable,

and in the same posture: her eyes rested on it in something between terror and satisfaction—for at least the features were those of a friend.

All day it went on thus; once she seemed to herself to swoon into a great darkness, from which she was snatched back by a voice that cried loudly in her ears—

"One of you shall betray me!"

She woke up, her heart beating suffocatingly, and could see no trace of any living thing. The long, terrible, lonely hours went on and on.

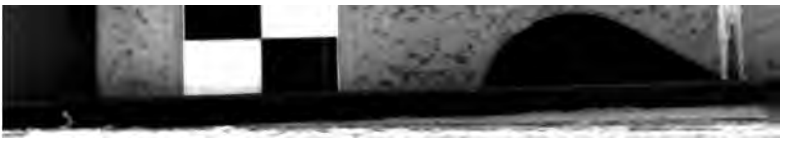
No one came, save once the milk-man. His loud knock and cry shook her out of a doze. She had an agonizing desire for a draught of milk, and strove to call to him; but even had she been able to make her voice loud enough to reach him, he was whistling and rattling his cans, and she had no chance. His retreating foot was the next thing she heard, and the milk he had left behind the door was as much out of her reach as though he had never brought it. At that, for a moment, she cried helplessly.

Then she recalled how this which had happened to her was an accident; she was not really forsaken—not absolutely destitute as those are who have not the love to turn to, even had they the power. The thought of Honora came back once more with supreme consolation; it was no longer a pain, it was a help to think of her. Thus and thus it would have been could Honora have known of her suffering. And then she thought of Paul, the friend whose calmer but unvaried kindness had covered years of her life. An immediate and sudden realization of what had happened followed upon that;

the renewed shock might have extinguished the little flutter of living activity that had returned to her brain, save that the thought of his kindness—his utter incapacity for malice or for harboured resentment—was uppermost in her mind. And then a cry for forgiveness trembled from her lips; and in her fancy her cry was met and covered by an instant and warm assurance of pardon. It must be so, for such was the nature of Paul.

She thought how the threshold of this door of desolate suffering had been trodden by human feet before, and that the way had been sharper to the steps. She was not alone. That supported her; to her the thought of sharing anything human, however bitter, could bring majestic tranquillity; an austere consolation descended upon her breast and brought it peace.

After that the sound of her own voice, the conviction of having uttered incoherent words, startled her. She concluded that she was getting worse and that her brain was more disordered, and that all power and self-control might leave her. The cold she suffered and the parching dryness were something inconceivable; and pain held her as in a vice. She knew now that, following upon days of exhaustion, over-excitement, and weakness, she was stricken with the prevailing plague of influenza. Nothing else could account for the fever, the shivering, and the extreme weakness. She calculated that, Sunday intervening, Honora would not miss her from the school until the day following. But she was convinced that on her non-appearance on Monday morning her friend would surmise that something was wrong and would come to enquire.



Monday afternoon, when school was over, was then the earliest that relief could reach her. How near was she to that? In her fever she had lost count of time. Time and eternity were one.

And then she remembered that Honora might not be disturbed by her non-appearance at first; she might not send; she might *wait* to hear something.

That last clear thought was again too much for her weakened brain. At the point she fell into delirium, and the chilly silence was disturbed by rapid incoherent talk of which she herself was unaware. This was followed by a season of quietude and blank unconsciousness. Hours passed, and she lay absolutely motionless. From this condition she waked at last.

The room was still as a vault and as black. She herself was a little blot of feeling in the midst of an appalling darkness. At first she thought it was night; and then she dimly surmised that the silence and the darkness were in herself. By a tremendous effort she raised her lids to ascertain. It made no difference.

"Now," said she, with a deep thrill, "this is Death. I feel more than I have ever felt before. But I am blind and deaf. Soon the feeling will go too."

Death! That appeared to signify the intensest expectation. The loud, laboured thumping of her heart—it seemed to tumble loosely in her breast—was rather a sensation than a sound. It was the only pain she felt. The thing seemed leaping with an agonizing fear which she herself did not share.

For amidst that physical convulsion her thoughts were tranquil and clear. She was certain of Death's ap-

proach. And she reflected that in this life all he precious things, her most delicate and refined things, the heart's core of her ruthless truth, had been rejected —misunderstood. She thought of it tearlessly. Ye no martyr in a Russian prison suffered more. She wa tearless, because she recognised in it a certain fitness, certain inevitableness—even a commonness of experience.

"I shall die," she said, "and it is best for me to go. God knows I was sincere; but I did not understand the Time nor the Time me. Some of the things I thought I still believe. My tremendous error was to dream that Truth is single. I am a woman whose mind was pitched out of its own era. It is well to die now. If I had lived, I should have been ground to powder."

It came to her with compelling clearness, as she lay there with her face sharpening, thinning, paling, and sinking into the pillow. Her brave, clear faith and ennobling tenderness had squandered themselves upon the impossible. Mercy itself could not have saved her—except by death only. She did not belong to her age.

Meanwhile, the coldness gathered. It was different from the cold of the fever; this was still and deadly. Even that sensation was extinguished at last, and the thumping of the heart grew less and less. She thought she was falling somewhere.

The bright sunshine of Monday noonday poured into the room in vain for her darkened eyes. It illumined the neglected, dust-covered furniture and the dead ashes in the grate, and lay upon the little white bed across the corpse-like figure with its sinking outline, and the sharp face whose only sign of life were the little puffs of

laboured breath that escaped at longer and longer intervals from the parted lips.

To the last her thought was occupied with Paul; the hateful atrocity from which he had suffered had returned to her memory—the atrocity in which she felt herself cruelly involved. With a certain tranquil majesty—as in the eye of Death—she laid aside the human anxiety for spoken forgiveness and threw herself upon a solemn trust in the slow, true judgment of Time, in the great and softening influence of distance, to bring gently to his mind a better discernment of her nature and motives than her acts had left him now.

"Why," thought she, "bemoan the fact that Death stayed my hand and stole my speech? Great hearts discern the hearts of others. I will trust this—even this—this darkness and silence. Speech would seem sweet. But I cannot reach him. He will never know that I struck the mouth that reviled him. I shall be a shadow in his thought. But only for a time. I will trust to the greatness of his heart now as I did not before. My best friend! You to whom I owe my best—why was my life poisoned by that bitter doubt of you? The bitter-sweetness of this unspoken trust is only left me now."

She lay still as death, small, white, broken. But the voiceless cry in its intensity might have vanquished space and penetrated to the ear of her friend.

Meanwhile, Honora startled at her absence, and still more by Lyttleton's arrival and news, was hurrying on her way to the flat in his company, her heart laden by an apprehension which had stirred it all too late.

It was a little after midday on Monday that Lucile's eyes opened once more in the conviction that the room was light again. It appeared to her a subdued imperfect light out of which the bookshelves and the old burns curiously and familiarly loomed. She longed for the power to turn her eyes to the window and catch a glimpse of the blue sky or even of the London grey again. But such a movement was beyond her.

Her eyes had fixed themselves on the door which stood opposite. Would it not open at last? Surely it would open. Why else should she gaze there with such certain expectation? And now surely—surely—it had moved forwards. There was a mist which prevented her from knowing certainly; the darkness had returned. But how otherwise could it be that everything was changing, that the sense of a presence near her was so strong? Assuredly that was a human hand laid upon hers. Ah! the very weariness and weakness were passing away. Perhaps it had been a dream. The weight and misery melted from her brain, a deep peace crept over her heart. She was quite well now; she was coming back to life, the nightmare of months was over and gone.

She remembered that her shoes lay near her bedside, it would be easy to stretch her hand and get them; she would put them on and run down the stairs and herself carry her own message to Paul's door. And in such a moment the girl's broken spirit floated away.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE snow lay thick upon the ground of the rectory garden and, blown by the piercing wind, clung in little heaps along the window-frames.

Honora shivered as she stood in the long bedroom that was still called her own. After her residence in London the width of the landscape, the expanse of sky —grey, winterly, and heavy with clouds—induced a feeling of defencelessness and solitude. She was dressed in mourning and her face was thinner and paler than it had been, and in her eyes when they were still was a hint of grave pathos infinitely beautifying.

There was nothing cheerless or despondent in her aspect, her black dress even was relieved by white at the throat and wrists, her bearing was composed as ever, but the over-elation was subtracted from it. Each morning when she waked her earliest thought told her that Lucilla was dead.

This was the first vacation that Honora had spent at home since she left the rectory in dudgeon. After the first paroxysm of grief was over Leslie had brought her down, abstaining, however, from himself participating in the meeting between the father and daughter. Her arrival at the rectory had been late in the evening, and her realization of the changes that had occurred there began only at the moment when she stepped from the cab and the front door was opened. The memory of former home returnings had led her unconsciously to picture a

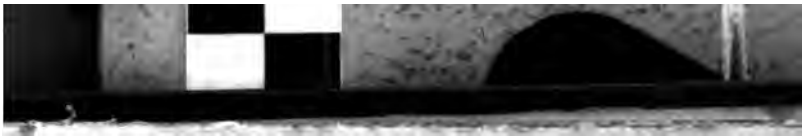
blaze of light in the hall and the glow of fires from the open doors of several rooms, a servant or two being there to receive her. Instead of this, her father stood on the threshold alone; his face was full of tender welcome, but the oldness of his clothes struck her instantly; behind him was the flicker of one niggard wick floating in oil (for light is expensive), and a small, economical glow from the open doorway of his study.

All the other rooms were closed; one surmised the darkness and the dreariness on which the keys were turned.

At the moment when her father led her into his study, Honora, her heart tender with its grief, would have given all she had to have dropped her handsome furs into obscurity and to have stood before him in the most worn of her working-dresses.

The next day's discoveries repeated those of her arrival. The rectory and the rectory garden had only been defended from the encroachments of decay by a single pair of domestic hands during months of time. The hands belonged to a rough maiden from the village, who did what she could in the kitchen to make the rector comfortable, and who spent the rest of her time in faint cleaning skirmishes amongst the many deserted rooms of the old house. As to his garments, with those she was faithful but inadequate. Honora noted with an indescribable pang that his worn shoes were tied with string in default of black ribbon. "He is my father!" said she, looking down at her well-cut gown; "and he is dressed like a beggar, while my clothes are new."

On that morning she left her cold bedroom to seek



the one inhabited room downstairs where breakfast was laid. Ever since her return her ingenuity had been exercised in trying to provide him with little luxuries without his knowledge. She fancied that she met with resistance, subtle but firm. This morning he stood before the fire when she entered, a letter in his hand. Honora caught up a pair of scissors from her work-basket, which necessarily had intruded itself amongst the rector's books, and taking his aged hand in her own, began snipping the frayed edges of his shirt-cuffs.

"Honora, *filia mea*," said the old man, "you have come back to make me feel the beauty of human love and companionship."

"Now, father! The other hand! And these shirt-links are not fastened! My scissors have made the cuffs tidier."

The rector submitted, looking with a curious wonder at the white capable fingers, and the vigorous wavy hair which she displayed as she bent over the work. Honora continually repressed an inclination to sob by tender activities of the kind.

"He is coming to-morrow, Honora," said her father.

"Leslie? Oh, I know that," she returned, absently. "Now promise me something?"

"What is that, my daughter?" said he, a faint anxiety in his face.

"That you will eat the egg I am going into the kitchen to cook for you. Poached, father dear. Cocoa is not enough for you."

It was wonderful to be waited on by Honora; it was wonderful to be forced to eat the dishes prepared by her

hands. When the egg was brought it was exquisitely done, for Honora had had practice in cookery; her dish had been caught by the fire, and the crossness of the handmaiden had had to be combated. The rector ate his morsel in silence; the meal was for her sake, not his own. It was wonderful that this capable, brilliant creature, whose existence seemed scarcely connected with his own, should make his little comforts and necessities her concern. His lips softened into a gentle play of affection every time he looked at her.

Honora was satisfied to have returned to him. The things by which she had been repulsed attracted her now. This atmosphere of serene holiness was a constant strengthening consolation not elsewhere to be found for grief, while the exercise of her ingenuity in combating daily, by strategy, his ascetic habit, filled up insensibly the feeling of her loss. The rector yielded a tranquil submission where it was possible, as one yields matters to the love of a beautiful child which one would not surrender to an equal. Now and then he broke into a gentle expostulation.

"You overwhelm me, Honora, with a personal indulgence long discarded by me. This self-denial is not a means only to that deed of reparation concerning which I spoke with you before, it is also a means of keeping bright my spiritual armour:—a humble effort to follow in the steps of my Lord, who had not where to lay his head. '*The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*'"

The rector's far-away eyes gazed over the plate of

dainty food which Honora had placed before him, seeking after that immemorial Figure for the traces of whose steps he constantly watched.

Meanwhile, it was easier to combat the movements of natural appetite than the pleading face of a beautiful daughter and the caressing hand that was busy even now with the table-napkin under his chin, in a ludicrous endeavour to create some semblance to an alderman at a city feast.

To such an ear as her father's Honora felt that she could confide the story of her grief. One evening she brought a footstool and, placing it near his feet, sat down upon it, and drew the volume out of his hand and laid it aside. And in that attitude she told him all she knew of the story of Lucilla. The rector laid his hand upon her head when he found that she was weeping.

"And you loved this strange, lovely child, Honora?" said he.

"Deeply, father dear, never another so much."

"Do not think, *filia mea*, that the child's ignorant aspiration was lost. I am touched by this history of a maiden whose heart was stricken by the sight of the undisputed sway of evil in our metropolis. I am moved at this undirected effort of a tender girl to contribute to the world's salvation. She parted willingly with her treasure on earth to lay up treasure in Heaven:—so we must think of it, Honora, and not as a loss. She gave her life; what can a man do more? She was one of those who, in painful ignorance it may be, and not knowing how to 'tarry the Lord's leisure,' yet made 'ventures for Christ's sake.' It would have been my privilege had

she lived to have known this young girl and to have learnt from her; also, it may be, to have instructed her. Time was—in my youth—when the church shrank—with a fear far from godly—from the reforming movement within the State; and I myself have yearned too much to be freed from the vexatious disputes of men, the rage of the heathen. But years have shown me that the Ark of the church is safe amid the storms of the world, and that God speaks to His people in the storm of men's affairs as well as through the services of His church. And it becomes His ministers to listen in that storm for 'the still, small voice' of His guidance and to hear it gladly. Be comforted, Honora. He who placed the aspiration in this child's heart understood it, and in spite of the mistakes of her ignorance, will know how to fulfil it."

Honora raised the old hand reverently and kissed it. The difference in opinion between them was still there, but the changes brought by love and grief had modified her attitude; it was the new tenderness of her heart which made her capable of gathering a meaning from that far-away spiritual holiness and discovering an adequate interpretation of his words.

"There is something more I want to speak about, father," said she, timidly; "will you let me?"

"Open your heart to the one who loves you, my daughter."

"It is that I know you are *not* using the one hundred and fifty pounds of my mother's income that I left you. I am rich: I have far more than that—more than I need or can use. And since I knew Lucilla I have hated

luxury and display. But you are too rigorous towards yourself, you deny yourself necessaries. Only use the one hundred and fifty pounds for my sake. Father dear!"—she raised her head from his knee with a coaxing entreaty in her face that crept to his heart—"I cannot put on my furs again unless you promise me. And I am cold."

The rector stroked her hair with inimitable gentleness. His hand upon her head felt like a benediction.

"Put on your furs, *filia pretiosa*. The Lord forbid you should be cold or suffer," said he. "The service of the Lord to me is peace."

There was not a hint of yielding in his voice.

"I think," said Honora, still more timidly, "that if my dear mother knew, she would wish it to be as I say."

The rector did not reply for several minutes. She noticed that his hand lay heavier on her head; she was sure he was thinking.

"No," said he, presently, in a low, clear voice; "if I thought *that*, I would yield. But she was ever before me in the road. Her spiritual insight was swifter. She, as the beloved disciple, lay near the heart of our Lord. My daughter, put this tender anxiety from your mind. It is well with me. The consolations of my God flow full and deep upon me."

Honora knew that it was vain to press him further. She sat quite still, looking into the small glow of the grate towards which it was necessary to press near to keep warm. And presently she found herself inspired by a new idea. She caught her father's hand in both of hers and looked up eagerly.

"Then make me another promise," cried she, with confidence in her voice.

He smiled down upon her.

"And what is this, beloved?" he asked.

"That money has been saving up, and there is gold of course behind it. Take that, too, dear father, and use that with the rest. I cannot touch it, and never will. It's for Lucilla's sake. I am sure that—though I never understood her—this is something like one of the things she meant. Take it, dear father!"

The rector leaned back in his chair and said nothing. It was impossible to refuse Honora's request, but his delicate sense of justice shrank from her proposal. That which was church property he was tenacious of for uses of the church. But this money was in no sense sacredly set apart for the exclusive service of the Lord, as he would have put it; and the girl for whose sake Honora was surrendering it, would probably have desired to return the money to the city of her love in some object of direct usefulness to its inhabitants. Finally it was arranged between them that the fortune of Honora's mother was to be presented for some collective purpose through Lyttleton to the man to whom Lucilla's last broken words were addressed.

Thus the inconceivable had by process of time and experience fallen naturally to its place, and Honora, without grudge or hesitation, had handed her own fortune to the Socialist Sheridan for uses of the community —even as her father had, in his way, done before her.

* * * * * * * *

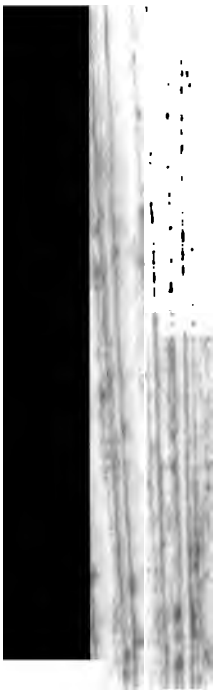
This time, when Leslie came he lingered.

One afternoon, shortly after his arrival, the iron grimness of the weather relaxed in favour of blue skies and sunshine. Leslie went out to see the communal possessions of the village. If the rectory had decayed, there had been lavish improvements in the adornment of the church. The edifice itself had been enlarged to accommodate the congregation of the poor, who flocked to hear the words of a man who supplemented his burning sermons by so much reality in practice. The organ was new and the music had been improved at some cost; the rector's aim was to ensure the conduct of a service whose exterior beauty and solemn perfection should answer in a measure to his own deep sense of the spiritual significance of the church sacraments and offices. Again, the doors of the church were always open as an invitation to the wayfaring man to repose; every day at an hour when it was possible for the villagers to attend, there was music for their refreshment, and at eventide a short service. The schools, too, were adorned and extended, and a reading-room had been opened. The rector thought he discerned the budding of a rich crop of piety in his flock.

Honora still surveyed these things in a silence within which lurked a remnant of protest. Inwardly she marvelled at the largeness of her father's ideas and the success of his achievement.

Leslie went on to the hills. He wanted them and their solitude for his thoughts. He was no more precipitate in his crowning bid for happiness than he had been in the preliminary steps, or in forming his moral conclusions.

Honora, seen again in her own home, was the changed



that perpetually haunted his mind; a
that passage of Honora through his
now as he walked over the hills, upon
of snow lay in dazzling whiteness, th
ground ringing under his step and the c
around, Honora's image, her voice, ge
frown and her smile, passed hither an
down his mind ceaselessly. Now and t
rose in his memory and hung there fo
It was always still and uplifted, the lip
pectation, and it was as far away as th
eyes. That was Lucilla's. Following
inevitably, the strong face of Sheridan.

Leslie stopped in his walk and looke
with knitted brows. One wonderful co
lay tremulous and shadow-like on the
guished only from the slow-moving clo
tionlessness. Dotted amongst the fiel
rough ledges of the hills, a burden of sn
upon them, were the old stone cottages

icular, in which, he had been informed, the old weaver Norbury (whose insignificant existence had proved so ominous to Honora) had lately passed away.

He had died hugging to the last the political dream of his youth, and, in spite of the fact that its formulations had become political commonplaces, still deeming its inner aspiration unfulfilled and keeping his faith in it as for a future hope.

"There is no such thing," said Leslie, "as the fulfilment of a dream. The dreamer stammers out conditions that appear to sum it up, but, they being fulfilled, the vision itself looms larger and more distinct. My deepest faith is in dreams," thought he.

He was standing near one of the low stone walls of the country, and, now that his own steps had ceased, the silence was so deep that any little accidental sound cut it like a rip in a texture. Deep and majestic also was the solitude.

And through this silence and solitude came to him a clearer sense—even than that which habitually haunted his mind—of the period of *Transition* in which he lived: —a knowledge, not mournful but tinged with solemn joy, that the Watchwords of the past are outworn and fading away to make place for the Watchwords of the future, dim and undefined at present, but charged with hope and progress and high inspiration.

> *"Then felt I like some watcher of the skies*
> *When a new planet swims into his ken;*
> *Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes*
> *He stared at the Pacific—and all his men*
> *Looked at each other with a wild surmise—*
> *Silent, upon a peak in Darien."*

Such was Leslie in this moment. Hitherto, in spite of intellectual apprehension, his virility had not always been able to escape moments of hesitation or the sickness and futility of regret. Of futile regret for a finished past—that century sickness, coincident to a period of *Transition*, which touches even stern and acquiescent minds when resigning their warm nests of the past, and which mounts to panic and clamour in the coarser natures of common unbelievers who are unable, in the momentary twilight, to conceive of the changing future save as the offspring of devils and of fools.

Just now the cry of Lyttleton was for a Leader, a "man consummate" who should interpret social visions into actualities more swiftly. But was such an one possible to an age of averages? He asked himself whether the Time was capable of imbuing any single personality with so much of the majesty of its qualities as to lift him conspicuously above his fellows. Its tendency, he thought, was rather to distribute its best characteristics so as to raise the democratic average than to create giants of resource and power. The very raising of the average reciprocally affected the foremost ranks, so that one after another in ever swifter measure, new spirits, equipped by energy, genius, and clear intention, stepped to the front and by their increasing numbers dimmed the pretension of any particular candidate.

In an age when genius is common and talent signifies mediocrity, is it possible in the nature of things that a Leader can be awaking? The search for the rare man is ever keener, the test severer. No mere aspirant will

—vet it. The Spirit falls where it listeth, and none can
— willing call It to himself.

As the words passed his mind, there floated into his
—emory, so that it hung there in unwonted clearness,
—e face of the dead Lucilla, the grey eyes with their
—nward look and the lips parted in suppressed expecta-
—ion.

With a sudden impulse he stooped down and wrote
—he syllables of a name with his finger on the snow.

* * * * * * * *

When Leslie returned it was getting dusk. The lights were not yet lit; for the economy in the rectory put off the season of lamps and oil-burning. Leslie found Honora in a small sitting-room, which, as a child, she had been accustomed to regard as a school-room. Here she was at liberty to keep up for Leslie and herself her own standard of comfortable living. She adjusted that standard to her father's. Nothing could induce her to put a match to her own lamp until her father's was illumined. Leslie found her, therefore, sitting in the firelight, a book upon her knee, her hands clasped behind her head, absorbed, apparently, in thought.

Around her, appropriately enough, were shelves full of school-books, and some of these she had pulled down. The table was strewn with them, as also with papers on which she had been taking notes and making entries.

Lyttleton, as he entered, had the feeling of unreality and of isolation common to intense thinkers; as though the atmosphere created by his own thoughts on the hills remained with him now and enclosed him in a world of

his own, throwing over external surroundings a dim and unsubstantial appearance.

Honora scarcely moved when he came in; she looked at him from under her eyelids and faintly smiled. He sat down opposite and himself experienced the pleasantly soporific effect of firelight. It intensified the fantastic evanescent feeling of wonder until the room was charged with it.

Lyttleton was altogether in a curious mood. He seemed to be sitting aloof even from himself, in a condition of absolute calm, watching the faces and the figures that flashed and vanished in his mind. Honora, the rector, Lucilla, Sheridan—they came and went in strange, monotonous repetition, as though their being there together were in itself of import, and as though at any moment their visionary proximity would spell a meaning to him.

"I am going up by the night-train," said he, presently; "I have sent my portmanteau on before."

"No dog-cart to take you now!" returned Honora, smiling.

"So that I have the advantage of a walk under this splendidly clear sky."

"I am sorry you are going."

Lyttleton considered the little sentence and the tone in which it had been spoken.

"Are you?" asked he, gently, after the pause.

"Oh, yes, Leslie! You must come again."

She spoke so warmly, so emphatically. Lyttleton, through the window, saw the stars crowding out in the sky. They were worlds full of light and life:—they were

pricks of a pin in a surface. Which? The room seemed to heave and fall. At one moment he stood on the edge of an abyss; in the next he was shut up between walls.

"I shall follow you back to London soon," said she, still with her hands behind her head against the chair back. "To me it will be different."

"Yes," said Leslie, kindly.

"And what, I wonder, are you returning to now?"

"To my ordinary work, and more than ever to Socialism. I heard from Sheridan at last this morning."

"That means news. Your face tells me so."

"Yes, Honora! Sheridan has accepted the trust. He tells me that for long he hesitated, unable to assure himself that he was the best to fulfil Lucilla's wishes as expressed through you. He bases his final consent solely on that piece of paper on which we found the three words written, and which I immediately conveyed to him. He believes that he is able to understand them, and that by accepting the trust of this money for her, and applying it to the wisest purpose of Socialism within his power of discernment, he will best be replying to the spirit of that message. He said that to do anything for her which he conceived was in the spirit of her deepest wishes was an unspeakable relief to him."

"Do you follow all this?" said she.

"Not all. I know that Sheridan was deeply moved and deeply startled by her death. I know that when I handed him the paper he read into it at once, something more than I could understand."

"There was a quarrel between them? There was discord—misery!"

looked up to the window. The s
quicker than ever. The snow
across the blackness of the window-p
still as that death of which they ha
made him think of the name he
the hills and freezing now into clea
it sky. When he next spoke it
slowly, and very deliberately.

"Your work—does it satisfy you, Ho

"My work!" The allusion seemed
altered her attitude for the first tim
down and sitting upright. "My w
we come to that. It is odd ho
completely satisfied I am! How d
I find myself to be! I have come
it. In this career I realize mysel
had pictured. I did not know my
proclivities until I had tried them.
independence suits me. I am standi
and I do not find myself conque
the whole, conquering them. I
definite place. What more than

sentence. It is possible that some ineffectual wave from the mind of the thinker opposite brokenly touched her, compelling her to words the more inappropriate in that they were a coincidence. At the moment a flame leaped up in the fire and revealed Leslie's face gazing at her. His eyes—grave and sad—held hers; and her heart stood still. There came into her mind a swift, strange apprehension of something that might have been and which yet she might miss. She sat more upright and waited in dim and rather fearful expectation. It was possible that all her preconceived ideas might be overturned in a moment, and that something might be revealed which hitherto her resolute commonsense had sternly held back from her conscious calculations.

The silence was prolonged.

During the time Leslie's mind probed deeply into the nature of things. And then he spoke.

"You are right," said he, firmly and quietly, "quite right."

They sat a little longer in silence. This time it was disturbed by Honora's rising from her chair. The commonplace rustle of her dress sounded to Leslie like the falling of the first spadeful of earth on a coffin.

The clock on the mantle-piece struck, and then he too rose to his feet.

"It is time for me to go," said he.

"You will put on your great-coat," said Honora, absently.

"Yes," said he.

And then they shook hands—Honora was surprised to find how calmly. She stood on the hearthrug look-

perfected a great and singular pertu
stole down her cheeks and her teeth
into her under-lip to keep back a fl
following.

"Oh, Lucilla, come back to me!
she cried.

Leslie walked rapidly through th
neared the church, he saw that it w
and the sounds of the organ and the
stole towards him across the frost-
membered this was the late service t
loved to collect such of his flock as
mediæval hand seemed softly laid up
century shoulder, and he paused.

The music acted on his sore and ag
soothingly, but rather to intensify it
point. The peace and mildness of it
reproach which as yet he could not tr
on, walking savagely and putting spac
and the rectory as quickly as he could
tried to tell himself that he had re

of an engine. And leaping, as it were, out of the chaos of busy sounds came a thought that drew the colour to his cheek.

He stood still.

The image of Honora seemed to be near him, soft, and blurred in tears.

"I wish I could see her like that," he said; "but I don't know that I deserve anything."

He drew back into the hedge, so that chance passers-by might not so easily discern him. And when a train rushed into the station which he judged to be his own, he did not move. It went out again, leaving him still standing where he was.

And then in a strange heat he turned on his steps and began to make his way back, by a short cut, to the rectory. He thought of the meagre light which Honora was wont to set up in the little school-room and by which she sometimes sat late into the night studying. Was that light still burning, or would it be extinguished?

Suddenly he began to run, not content with the pace even of a rapid walk. A feeling of self-derision spurred him. It had always been so hard to Leslie to decide.

"Will she forgive me?" he thought. "I have acted like a fool."

The white fields and hedges raced past him. He thought of Honora's calm manner, of her brightness and her cordial tones. He criticised her while his heart beat and burnt. Now he pictured her snipping the frail light out with her fingers. Then it blazed clear and strong, and her head was bowed beneath it weeping.

"That," he said, "might save me."

He turned a corner and the rectory buildings lay massed before him in cold, dark heaps. It was an eyeless thing, sullen and poverty-stricken, under the winter's night. Tremblingly he searched over the darkened windows. The rector's lamp was extinguished and the study closed. Beyond, in a humble corner of the building, half hidden behind a tree, he thought he saw a ray from the little school-room window.

Inside sat Honora at the table, her head bowed amongst her books, in a trouble and despair that no effort of will could hold in abeyance; she still fought for her equilibrium, but it was with losing forces.

Leslie, re-entering, called her softly by her name. She lifted her head, and the pair of long-tried friends gazed silently each into the eyes of the other. And suddenly Honora saw him as he was; the difficulties of his slow and reticent nature and the worth of it that lay behind were clear to her mind; as clear to her judgment stood her own relation to him. With an instant and simple gesture she laid her hands upon his shoulders and his own followed them. He pressed them with the warm insistent pressure of a man, and it went to her heart so that her fingers melted and clung to his, and her eyes and whole face changed under his gaze. In such a moment the great and golden glory of passion—which had always lain as a possibility behind her friendship—came to her. There was a beauty in her face he had not seen before, and it was for him.

"I have great need of love, Leslie," said she, with a grave and lovely smile.

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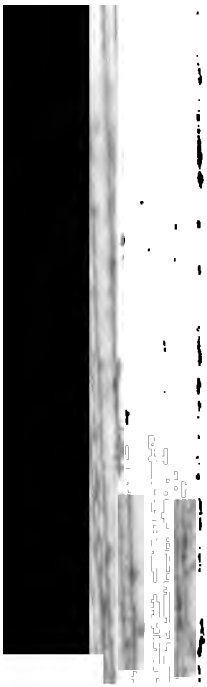

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